FRANCHESCO, DÆRICK GRÖSS, TRIBE TRADING CARD

ARENA

MAGAZINE

No..9
Apr., 1993
$3.75 U.S.
($4.50 Can.)

DE QUESADA

TERVIEWED

WOLVERINE © MARVEL COMICS GROUP

FRANCHESCO, DÆRICK GRÖSS, TRIBE TRADING CARD

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JOE QUESADA INTERVIEWED

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JOHNSON STROMAN

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Character appears in Tribe #7!

Entries must be postmarked by June 25, 1993.

ARENA

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ROB LIEFELD, KEVIN VAN HOOK TALK ABOUT DEATHMATE!

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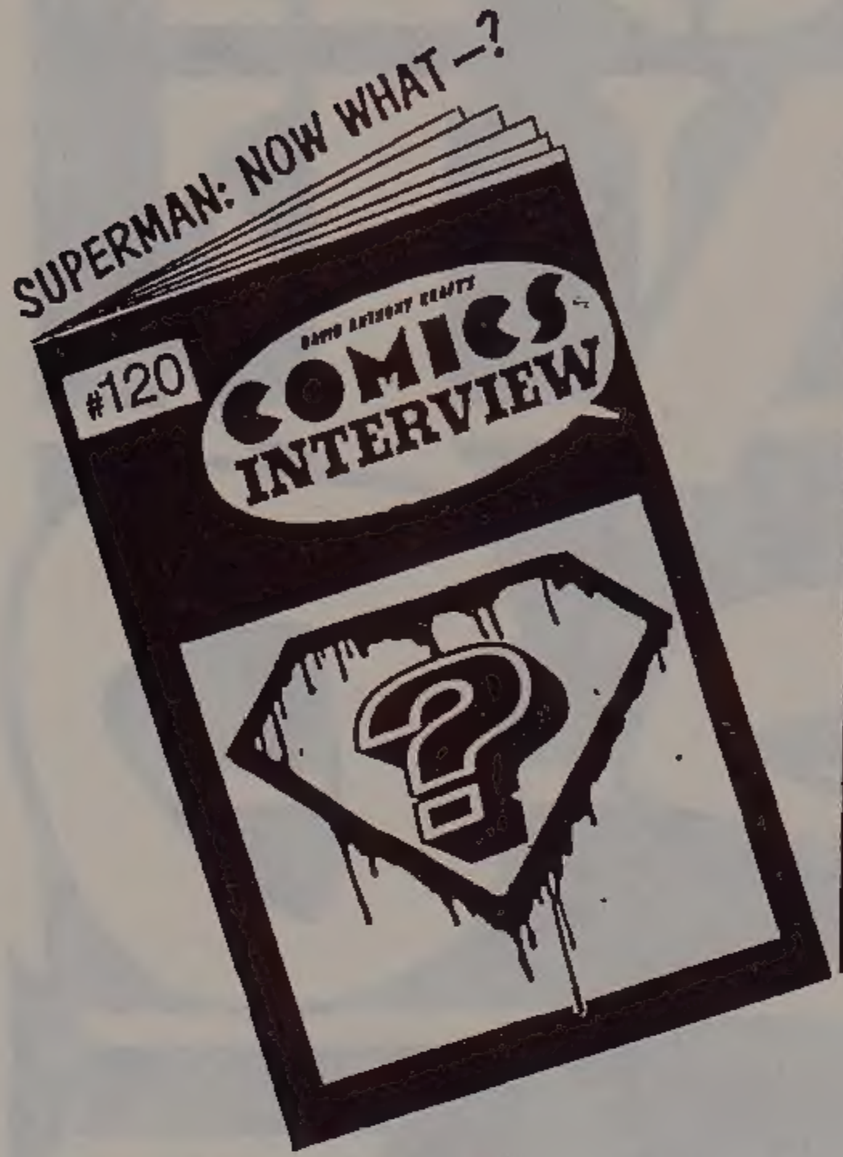

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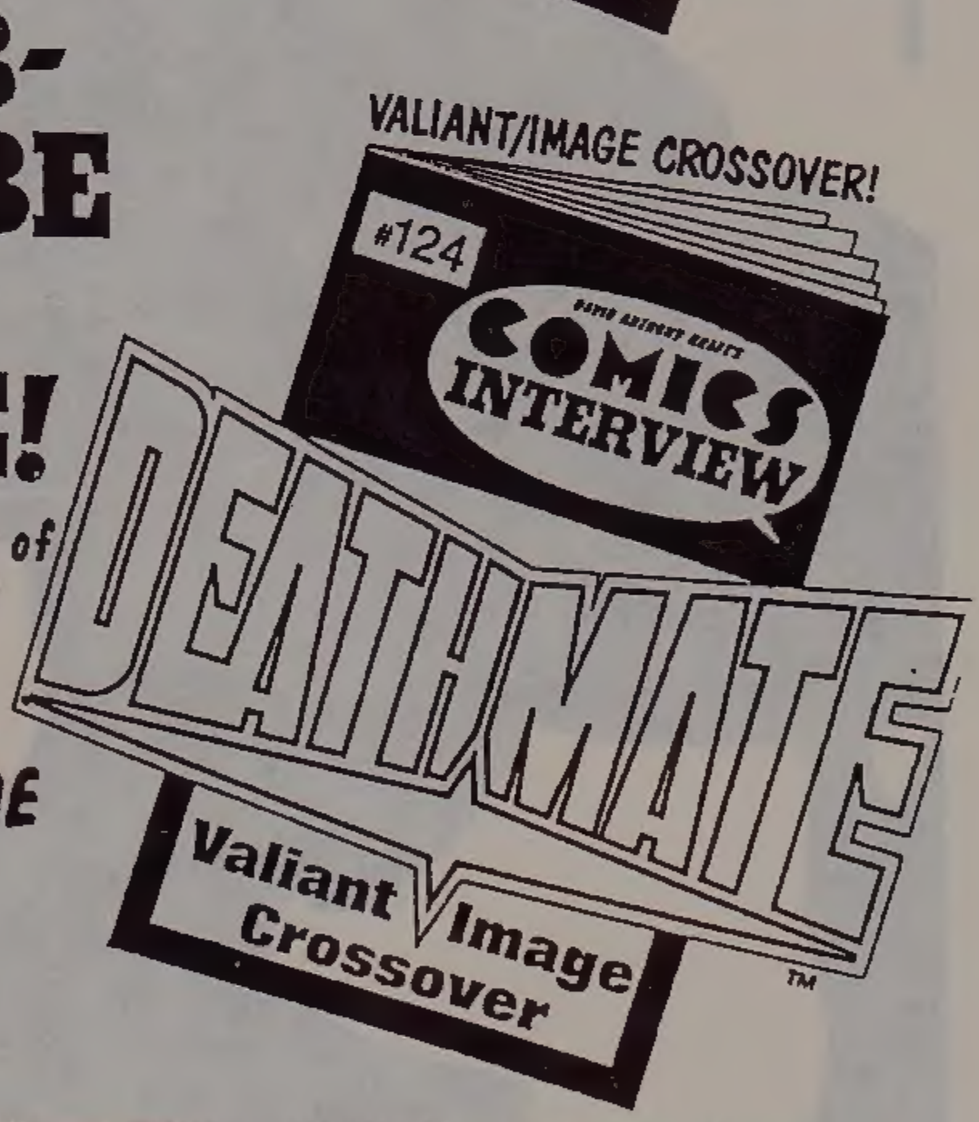

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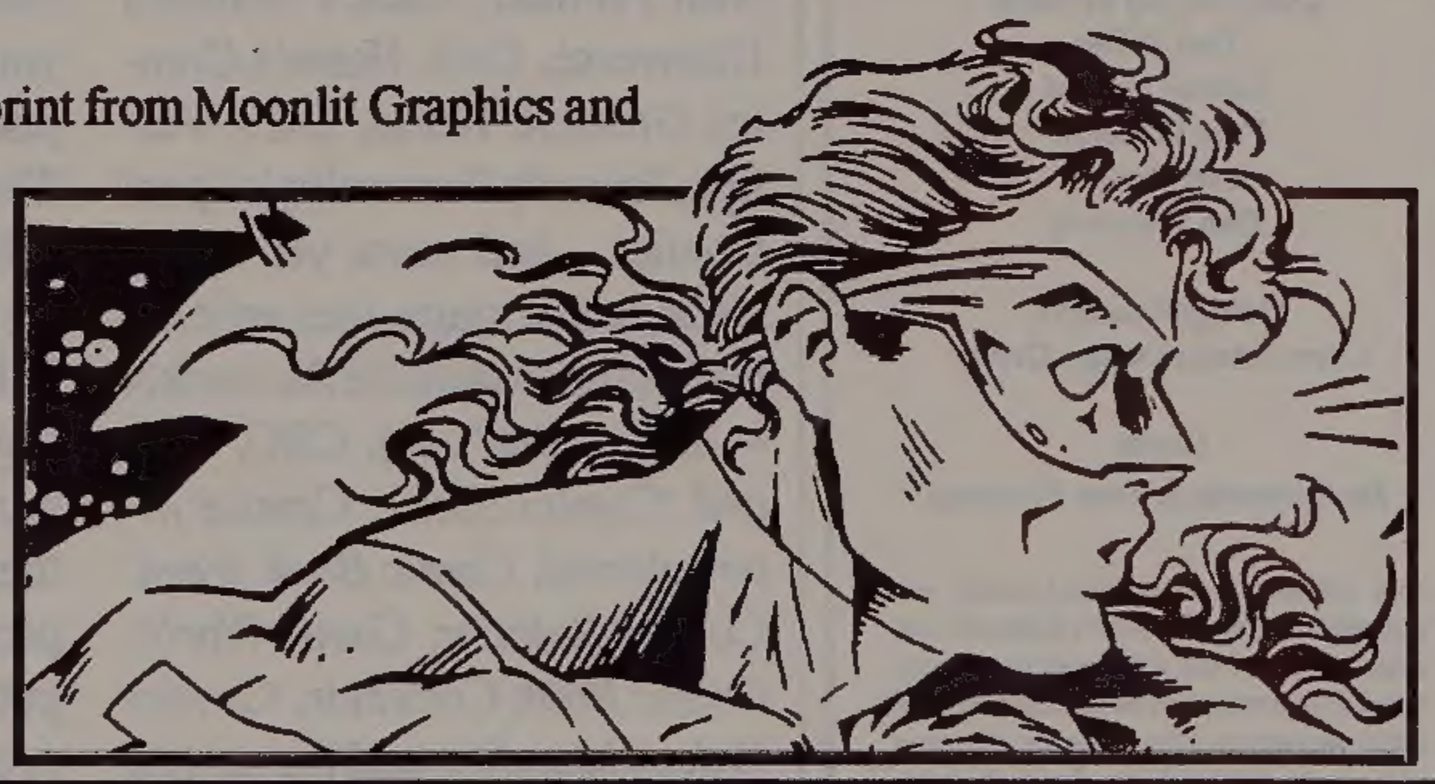

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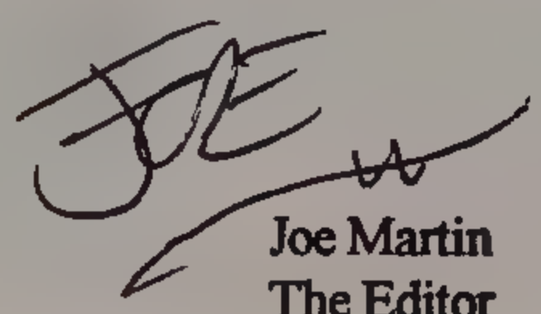
Editorial

I knew it was coming but still I'm amazed. You've got all the big publishers -- Marvel, DC, Image, Valiant, Dark Horse, Malibu and Topps (once the Big Two, soon to be the Big Ten!) -- and then you've got tons and tons and tons of the other guys -- Caliber, Innovation, Eclipse, Warp, Mirage, Continuity, Harris, Tundra, Kitchen Sink, Fantagraphics, FantaCo, Sky, Aardvark - Vanaheim, Rebel, Millennium, Northstar, Comico, Heroic, Blue Sky Blue, Continum, AC, Friendly Personality, Gladstone/ Disney, Fleetway/Quality, Cry For Dawn, Fathom, Conquest and the list goes on. Hold on because that's not all. There's "new kids on the block" -- there's Defiant, Chaos, Triumphant -- and there are various comic imprints such as -- Daerick Gross Imprints from Heroic, Milestone from DC, Gauntlet from Caliber, Marvel's got Epic, Marvel UK is hitting with Frontier, there's Malibu's Ultraverse, Dark Horse's Comics Greatest World, DC's Vertigo, Friendly Personality's Spoof Comics... and more yet again. Heck, comic magazines are even beginning to saturate the market -- *Arena* (that's us), *CBG, Wizard, Comics Scene, Comics International, Comic Book Week, Comics Retailer, Comic World, Comic Book Collector, Comics Values Monthly*, and the newest additions, *Amazing Heroes Interviews* (yes, they're back), *Comic Book Weekly, Comic Talk* and the highly acclaimed *Hero Magazine*... and, in case the thought hasn't crossed your mind, *Advance Comics* and *Previews*, the distributor **catalogues** with circulations of 100,000+, are getting in on the interview/ preview action (tell me if that bodes well).

So, what I'm getting to is the magnanimous amount of decisions that you, as a buyer, will be forced to make in the very near future (as if you're not making them now, but that's not the point of this editorial). What is a fan to do? Should you shirk titles you're reading now in lieu of new ones? Should you just buy all new titles? Buy collectible titles for possible investment? I don't know about you guys but there's only so much money in my pocket. I suppose that's why I'm not just amazed by this whirlwind of sequential output but I'm wary and yes, uneasy. It has come to the time now where we must tread softly. Buyers Beware! Publishers Be Careful! There is a finite amount of consumer dollars out there and there's a finite amount, unfortunately, of comic readers. But I suppose it would be uncanny if *everyone in the world read comics.*

Choose wisely. Pick up the books that interest you and that you're certain you will read, not just because it has beautiful art. That's a shame and I almost want to bite my tongue when I say it but it's the only advice I can truly give in this situation. I just keep feeling that something is going to burst. Sometime (soon) when there's 375 publishers out there producing over 300,000 comic publications and everyone who ever wanted to be a comic book creator has a job, that 376th publisher is going to be the one that breaks the monkey's back.

Until next month, be swell.



Joe Martin
The Editor

FEMALE TROUBLE

SEEKER

SEEKER: VENGEANCE #1 JULY '93
Joe Martin \ Willie Peppers \ Allen Freeman

SKY COMICS

MORGANA X

MORGANA X SPECIAL #1 JUNE '93
Quinton Hoover \ Allen Freeman

Thrown To The Lions!

CORRESPONDENCE & ADVICE

First off, to begin this session of "Thrown To The Lions" let's have a big round of applause for the man who gave this column its appellation, ***Tim Hewing*** *of Philo, IL. Yes, it is he who sent in the suggestion for the header you now see above. Thanks, Tim. You win a free print signed by Lurene Haines and for doing such a good job, we're NOT going to give you a six month subscription -- that's right, NOT! You get a year -- yes, one year's worth of Arena Magazine for free!! What more could you ever ask for? Don't answer that. Onward and Tally-Ho!!*

To *Arena Magazine*:

I just wanted to send you a quick note of congratulations on another job well done. Issue #6 was great. I found the industry news helpful and the interviews interesting. I especially enjoyed Lurene Haines' article and look forward to future installments. Keep the good work coming!

Tim Hewing
Philo, IL

Thanks, Tim. We hope you enjoy your subscription and "we'll keep the good work coming."

Dear Bob and Joe,

For one, I'd like to say that I enjoy what you guys are doing enough not to nitpick on every little typo that I see in your mag. Scott Kincaid's letter in *Arena #6* was a real smack in the face to a bunch of fellas who are just trying to report the news and give even further enjoyment to people who want to know more about the industry. So, anyway, chill out, Kincaid. Sit back and enjoy *Arena* for what it is, man.

But I didn't write just to jump that guy's case, I wrote because I felt compelled to. After meeting Bob and Joe at the New York Con, I have to commend you guys on what you are doing. It looks like, without a whole lot of backing, you've jumped into this thing and made it into something really great. Honestly, I hadn't heard of *Arena* until the convention, but since then I've picked up issues #5 and #3 and I enjoyed them just as much as #6. I look forward to many more issues and I'll get them whenever I see 'em. After talking to Bob, I feel like I know you guys and unlike meeting a lot of industry people and feeling really let down or disappointed because such and such "professional" is a real pencil-necked geek, my impression is that you guys are really cool. At least you're much more "hip" than those corporate butt-kissing *Wizard* guys who just think they're "hip." What a waste.

So, keep it up, gentlemen and continue to impress me. I look forward to meeting you again.

Take it easy (and I hope being across from the Image booth turned out good for you guys),

Mark Pascadero
White Plains, NY

Being across from the Image booth, Mark, was, in a nutshell, interesting. Overall it went well except for when they had to shut down the aisle. The foot traffic was getting so overwhelming that people were nearly being crushed! The Image dudes decided to hand out a couple free ***Supreme #1*** *gold editions and it created a mob scene. I was thinking, "Hey, these are comics!" Now, I hear those* ***Supreme's*** *are going for about $75!*

Anyway, I'm pleased you didn't find us to be "pencil-necked geeks." It seems that even though we claim we are not competing with ***Wizard Magazine****, everybody likes to compare us with that mag above all others. Perhaps it's the format, I'm not certain, but thanks for the favorable review.*

Also, Kincaid has "chilled out" although yours wasn't the only letter we received reprimanding the guy. One person wrote wanting his address! Jeez! It's okay, folks. We concede that there were typos and we're doing our best to fix them. We like negative letters, too. It's all good fun. Hey, these are comics!

Dear *Arena Mag*,

What's up? Nothing much here. Just going through this month's buys and I picked up *Arena #6* because you had the Main Man on the cover and I can't pass up anything Lobo-related.

Hey, I saw where you guys are published out of Florence, Kentucky and I live in Florence, Alabama. Pretty weird, eh? Anyway, the Val Semeiks interview was good. I wasn't even sure who he was at first but I got those cool issues of the *Demon* when Lobo was in them. I don't pay much attention to the artists and writers as much as I like the characters. You know, Wolverine and the Punisher and the Spawn. I do like McFarlane whenever he does anything, though. But *Youngblood* was kind of goofy if you ask me. How could you tell who anybody was? I was like "What?" *Spawn* and *Pitt* are good, though.

But I didn't write to talk about those guys. I just wanted to say

that I like your magazine. It's good reading. I don't read any other magazines except *Wizard* but I think I'll keep giving yours a try. In the editorial, Joe Martin said to "be swell." Ha! That's pretty good. Not like "Cool!" and "Rad!" which is kind of the irritating thing about *Wizard* but that's okay. I wonder why they don't do anything with Lobo on it.

Aw, who cares. *Arena's* pretty swell! See if you guys can do a McFarlane interview.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Marley
Florence, AL

When I read your letter, Jeremy, I just had to print it. You know, I think every state has a Florence in it. If you're reading this and you live in a Florence out there somewhere, drop us a line. Maybe we can form a secret group or something. "Swell," huh? But, thank you, Jeremy, for the letter and we're always happy to hear what you think about the actual comics that make up this industry. McFarlane interviewed next month! No joke!.

Dear *Arena*:

An interesting format change - - why did you decide to box all the pages? I understand how you're testing the waters but in my opinion the lines are a bit too restrictive. I think you need to open the pages up more. I mean, comics are to set the imagination free, not to box it in.

Aside from that small contradistinction, I enjoy most everything in your magazine. I say "most" however. Your Brit Bits articles by Paul Birch are a bit strange. I suppose it may be interesting to some people but I can't seem to follow it that well. It seems to me that Birch rambles and I am just not able to follow. Perhaps it's that continental gap that forms a mental gap but, for some reason, he and I don't seem to be on the same vibe. I'm not suggesting that you should not carry it, though. Others probably enjoy the article it's just that I don't adhere to it and I felt I should mention that to you.

On the other hand, I received great enjoyment from Jerry Smith's "Not Really The News" item. I hope to high heaven that Mr. Nicieza read that and wrote to you. I'd love to hear his thoughts on that piece. It was very amusing (and perhaps a bit too close to the truth).

The news is very informative and the interviews are interesting and cohesive. All in all, aside from the confining boxes (which may work well in some features but not the entire publication), *Arena Magazine* is a very thorough and enjoyable product.

In truth,

Oakie Saladino
Joliette, Quebec
Canada

Thanks for being truthful, Oakie. You'll be happy to know that we have dropped the boxes throughout the entire publication and use them now for purposes of emphasis only. So far, no word from Nicieza about the article. I'd like to hear what he has to say, too. Jerry Smith even sent a copy of that issue to Mr. Nicieza so, who knows, maybe he'll get to it eventually, right after he finishes the plot for the next ***Barbie Annual****.*

Dear Sirs;

I really don't care if *Magnus: Robot Fighter* is worth a thousand dollars, a fan magazine with a price guide is a bunch of malarkey. I sincerely hope that *Arena* doesn't go that way. I enjoy *CBG*. I enjoy *Comics Interview*. I enjoy *Arena Magazine* but if I want a price guide I'll buy *Overstreet's* or maybe *CVM*. I don't know, I just woke up this morning with a real pet peeve whispering in my ear. By midday, the little fella was screaming at the top of his lungs. I had to write this. The peeve made me do it. I'm sorry.

Your friend and reader,

Lisa Stevens
Canton, OH

P.S. I'm guilty. I didn't just write to you guys. I wrote to *CBG*, too. I had to tell you.

Let me guess... the peeve made you do it. Aw, shucks, Lisa, who cares as long as you did write to us. Thanks a million! And, NO! We will NEVER have a price guide! Besides you being right that you should be buying Overstreet's for that sort of thing, it's a rueful waste of paper and way too much work.

NEXT! Anyhoo, I hope that everybody is enjoying their Tribe trading card as well as reading this edition of AM. In AM #10 we have a beautiful fully painted *Aliens* cover by that aesthetic madman of painting mayhem, Dave Dorman! As well as an interview with him and Steve Bissette by none other than Lurene Haines! Also, we'll spolight Shooter's Defiant as well as have chats with Todd McFarlane, T & M Bierbaum, and Brian Pulido! Be there, or be a rectangle!

NO WAY!

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JOE QUESADA

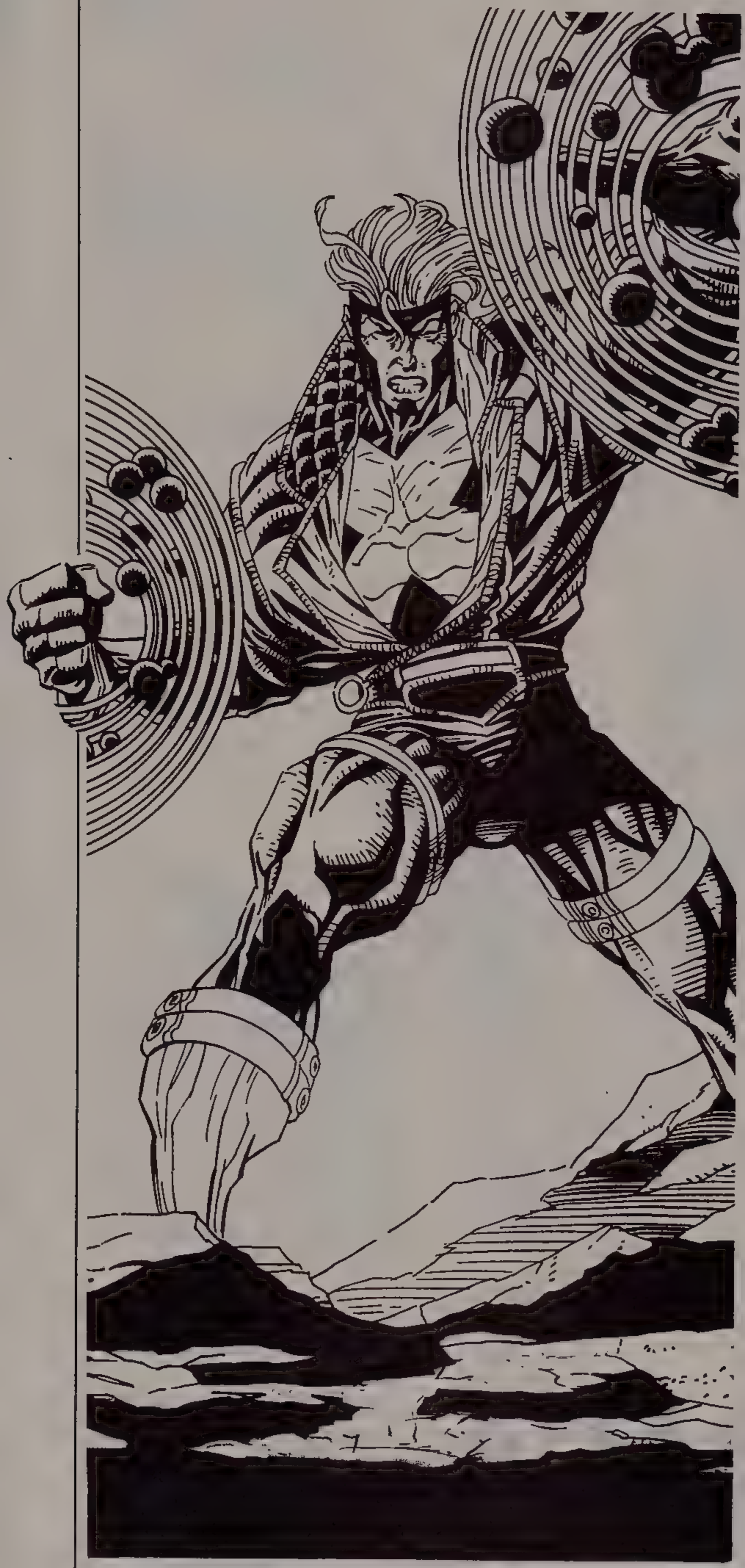
THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND!

Interview by Dan DiDio

I met Joe Quesada for lunch at a restaurant on Manhattan's East Side. The restaurant was a regular for Marvel employees and it displayed a framed two page spread from Jim Lee's X-Men on the wall. Although we had spoken briefly before, this was the first time I had spoken at length with Joe without being interrupted by a fan asking for an autograph. His, not mine.

Dan DiDio: *How did you get involved in comics?*

Joe Quesada: For a short story (it's a long one), I was into comics when I was a kid and although I grew out of them, I went to art school and majored in illustra-



tion. After a while I left school to do some work in the illustration field. Hated it beyond belief. It was incredibly boring and I didn't have the patience to draw the same old image for a week or two.

DD: *When you say the illustration field, do you mean animation or...*

JQ: It was magazine and commercial illustration. Now, at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, I had taken a couple of comic book related courses but I never did anything with it and after failing in the illustration field I felt I failed as an illustrator. So I started working a lot of clerical jobs during the day while continuing as a musician and songwriter. Both are something I have been doing for years.

DD: *Have you ever had any of your music published?*

JQ: No, we are working on that right now. Years ago, we were nominated one of the best bands in the tri-state area by K-Rock radio.

DD: *The name of your band?*

JQ: It doesn't matter because we're changing the name and this is a comic related story. Anyway, I worked a lot of crappy day jobs and one I found particularly boring was sales. One day I was just sitting and doodling on a napkin when this stockboy came up and said that I was real good and I should be drawing for comics. I said, "Come on! Comic books are for kids." And he replied, "No, they're not." The next day he came back with the first issue of *The Dark Knight Returns*. It had just come out that week. He handed it to me and said, "Here, read this." I did, and I was blown away. So, I went to the local comic store and went through the racks. I had just enough money to buy one comic and, by sheer luck, I picked up the first issue of

Watchmen. It's been all downhill since then [laughs].

DD: *That's a good one-two punch.*

JQ: It got me hooked. For the next two or three years I kept reading. Then, when I was working at another job, in walks a customer by the name of Art Nichols. We started talking and he mentioned that he was into comics. He tells me he's working for this new company called Valiant. Now, by this time, I made some friends in the comic field, and Joe Rubenstein had coached me into putting together some sample pages. I showed Art what samples I had and explained that I'm mostly an illustrator, to which he replied that this was great because they were looking for full color illustrators. That was my in. So, I went over to Valiant and showed them my portfolio. It was years old but it still got me the job. With Valiant, I started as a colorist and eventually did a couple of pinups and a 10-page *Legend of Zelda* story. It was never published.

At that time, the company had some financial problems. Remember, this was early on, and they laid off a third of the art staff. Being that I was only there for a couple of months, I was one of the people that had to be let go. I took my portfolio over to Jim Owsley at DC. He was honest with me, he said he had only two books and no work available. He asked me if I had a job and I told him that I didn't, so he gave me an inventory cover to do. I came back with it the next day and at the very moment I was handing it to him, his artist on *Spelljammers* quits. He turns and asks me if I wanted the book and I said, "Yes!" [laughs] That was two years ago and I haven't stopped working since.

DD: *What came next?*

JQ: From *Spelljammers*, Owsley gave me *The Ray* and actually let me create the character!

DD: *How much input did you have on the character and the design?*

JQ: The design was completely mine, the only thing Jim stipulated was that the character had to have a fin on his cowl or helmet because it was part of the character's trademark. Consequently, people have told me they like him without the fin, but that's neither here nor there. I handed in several different looks including my preferred, which is the one they went with. As for the actual character, that was Jim and Jack Harris, although a lot of the character Jim took from me. He used to say that I was the Ray! His stupidity and shyness are a lot like me, I guess [laughs]. This book was truly a collaborative effort.

DD: *How did it sell?*

JQ: It sold really well, considering DC never promoted it. There were no house ads because no one thought the book would do anything. But it sold out its small print run mostly because of Mark Beachum's cover. The first two books were in the top 100, so I guess it can be considered a success.

DD: *A nice start.*

JQ: Between *Spelljammers* and *The Ray* I did a couple of issues of *The Question Quarterly*. This was a real trial by fire since the first issue was 47 pages long and had to be done in two weeks. Let's say, while working that hard, you can learn a lot.

DD: *Who would you say are your favorite influences?*

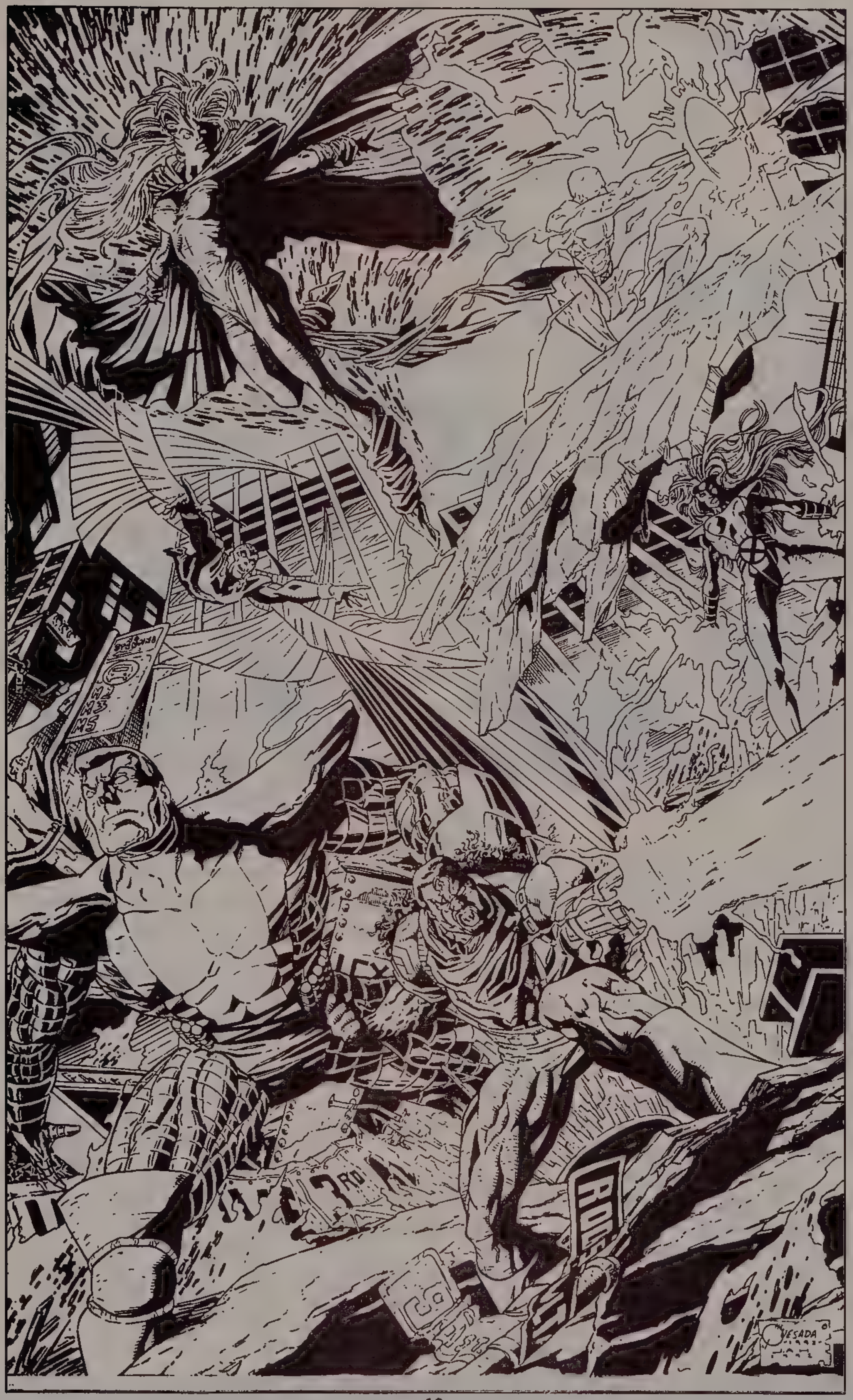
JQ: The three M's. Mignola, Miller, and Mazzuchelli. That's the modern crux of artists. I also look back at Alex Raymond and Alex Toth, that stuff really blows me away. Really, I guess you can say anybody graphic.

DD: *Did you discover their work when you were reintroduced to comics?*

JQ: Yeah, I found Mike in the *Phantom Stranger* and *Krypton* books. I remember meeting Mike up at Marvel and when I introduced myself he pointed his finger and joked that I was the guy "doing" him. He was really nice and invited me to his studio. We spent the next four hours going over the theory of blacks. He gave me great insight and from that point on, everything changed.

DD: *How did you land X-Factor?*

JQ: That basically came from my work on *The Ray*. Bob Harras was keeping an eye on what I was doing. When the *X-Factor Annual* came up, he asked me and I did it. Now he's got me doing a monthly.


3RD
QUESADA

DD: *Do you plan on sticking with it?*

JQ: Yeah. I really wanted a monthly so I could stabilize my schedule and establish myself on something. I plan on staying with the book until they kick me off.

DD: *Now that you have a monthly, any plans on cutting down on the number of covers you do?*

JQ: One of the problems I had as an illustrator was working on that single image. So, yes, I will cut down on my covers although I plan on doing some covers for Valiant and I'll continue to do the covers of my own books because it's fun.

DD: *After rediscovering comics with* ***Dark Knight****, was it fun to do Batman in* ***Sword of Azrael****?*

JQ: Every day at DC I would tell every Batman related writer, artist, and editor that I would give anything to do a Batman story! They gave me 9 pages in the *Legends of the Dark Knight Annual #1* and then *Azrael*.

DD: *Did you want to be involved in DC's plans for Azrael?*

JQ: I was asked to do *Batman* literally the day after I took on *X-Factor*, but since I shook hands on the X-book... oh well! I know they have some really good plans for him.

DD: *When we were talking before the interview started, you seemed generally amazed by the fan reaction to your work.*

JQ: It's been good but I feel like I'm in the eye of a hurricane. I just sit at my drawing board and crank away 7 days a week so, except for the occasional personal fan letter -- which is great -- I don't have a good idea of what's going on out there. I mean people tell me something big is going to happen to me but that bugs me to hell.

DD: *In what sense?*

JQ: It's like people saying that this is going to happen to you and people are going to love it but nobody really knows. I just want to do the best work I can possibly do and if it happens, it happens. My job is to entertain, I got that from my music, I'm not here to please myself. Of course, there is some pleasure I derive from this, but I'm doing this because people want to read my work.

DD: *How did you like the writers you were teamed with?*

JQ: Each writer I've worked with has been different.

Denny O'Neil writes full scripts, page by page, panel by panel. In a way that's harder to do because he has a distinct vision on how he wants it done and I want to be respectful to that vision. So I must give him what he wants while keeping it interesting to me because I may not do things the exact same way he does.

Jack Harris writes plots in a page by page breakdown.

Then, I worked with Fabian Nicieza on the *X-Factor Annual*. At the time, Fabian was writing all the annuals, two books and God knows what else! The actual plot of the annual was three pages long and the annual was 35 pages. So, he gave me a few paragraphs telling me what should happen and "to have fun."

Peter David is the reason I'm working on *X-Factor*. When all hell was breaking loose with the guys from Image, Bob [Harras] was testing me out to see which X-Book I'd like to do. Now, I really loved Peter's writing, so it didn't matter to me where *X-Factor* fell on the X-book's hierarchy. Even though *X-Factor* was the "low-man on the totem pole," I really wanted to work with Peter.

DD: *Anyone else you would like to work with?*

JQ: I want to work with Miller or Moore, that's an artist's dream. If I achieve that, I would have nothing else to do.

DD: *Any desire to go the writer/artist route?*

JQ: Maybe someday. No credible desire to do it, though. I feel I have too much to learn as an artist. God forbid that I try to convolute the whole issue by trying to write. Maybe someday, you know, "never say never." Yeah, eventually, I would like to create my own characters.

DD: *Looking at your work you*

seem to stay away from the "poster art" style that is prevalent in comics today.

JQ: I make a very conscious effort to do that. Storytelling is very important to me. I feel that comics have gotten away from that, now it seems as if they are just giving images. Not to say what they are doing is wrong, it's just not the way I would go about it. Besides, I like to try something different. I try not to look at what is incredibly popular. Not to say that it isn't incredible but, if I follow it, all I become is a watered-down version of what is popular. If I tried to copy Jim Lee then all I'd get were the jobs Jim turned down. Not that that's so bad, but I've never been refused on my own style.

***DD:** On a final note, I hear that DC plans to do a **Ray** monthly. Any thoughts on that?*

JQ: I'm saddened because I can't do the *Ray* monthly but my hands are tied. If you look at any other artist's career there is always that one project they are known for. For me it's the *Ray*. I started out as an innocent and I became known for that one job. The book and the character are very special to me.

***DD:** Very good. Thanks, Joe.*

JQ: You're very welcome.

Since the interview, Joe Quesada's star continues to rise as evidenced by recent prestige assignments he has taken on. Along with Bob Layton, Jorge Gonzales, and Jim Palmiotti he kicks off a new book for Valiant, X-O Manowar #0 and he is also currently designing the cover to Batman #500 in which he creates the new look for a "new" Batman.

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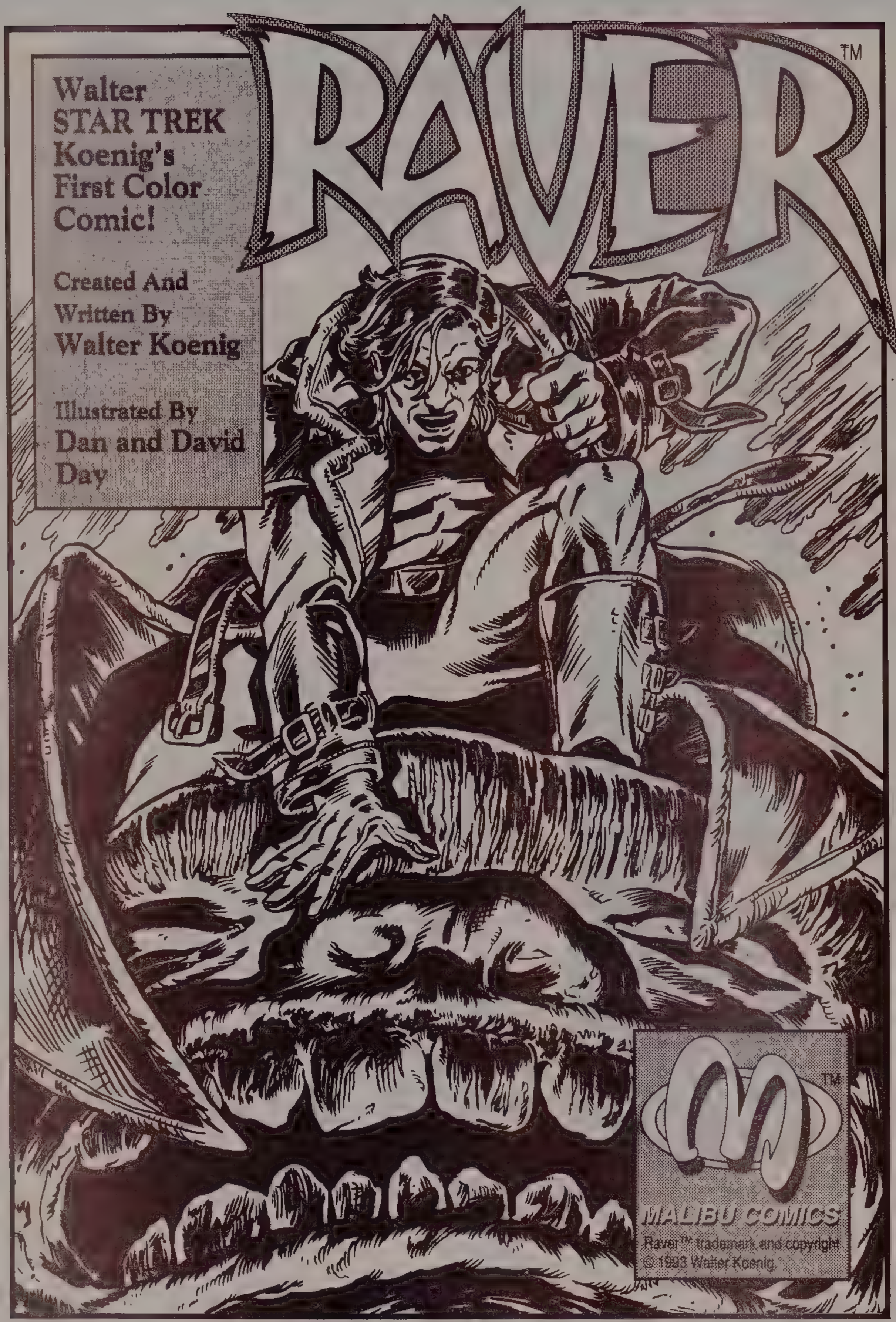
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Comic News

Archie News

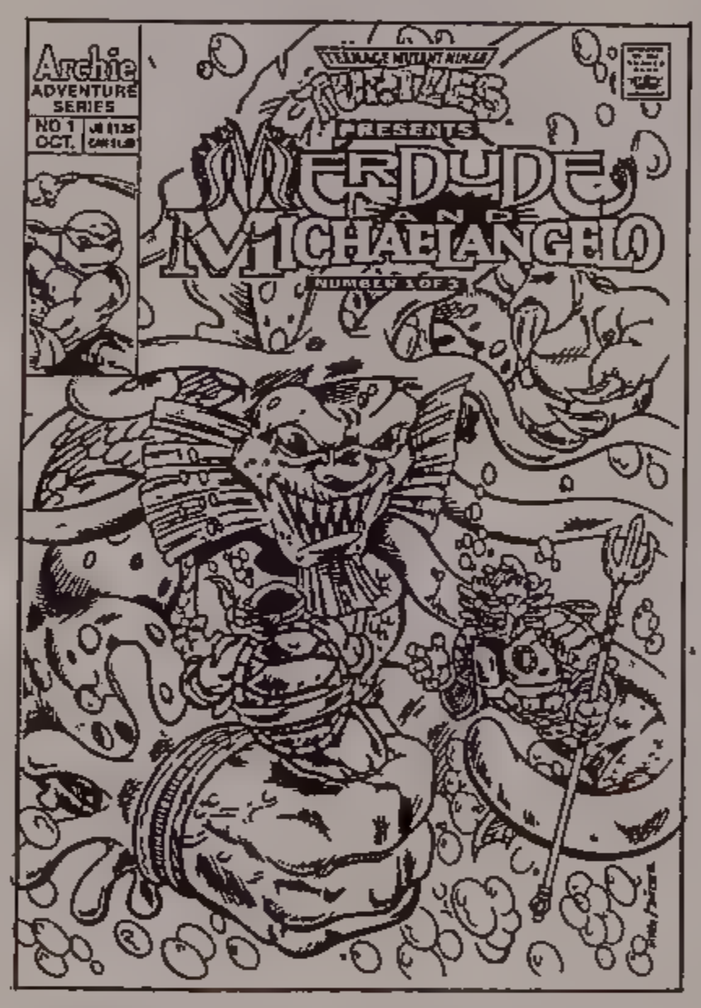
Environmentally Aware Archie

Two great stories! "Bird Drain": It's the thrilling conclusion to the three issue mini-series, as the Conservation Corps must save Earth and the planet Danopaulus from a Robotized Oily Bird! Plus: "Fossil Fuel": Just when they think they can rest, a new environmental threat arises to keep the Corps busy -- the colossal Styrano-Foamus Rex! This sets the stage for the upcoming ongoing *Conservation Corps* series, and complements the inevitable Jurassic Park movie mania! Scripting is by Paul Castiglia with art by Dan Nakrosis. This series features pulse-pounding pin-ups by fan-favorites Eric (*Oz Graphic Novels)* Shanower and Amanda (*Barbie)* Conner!

If retailers order a minimum of 15 copies of *Conservation Corps #3*, they qualify for one free Conservation Corps plastic finger ring (children's size). Limited quantities -- first come, first served.

Merdude Mania

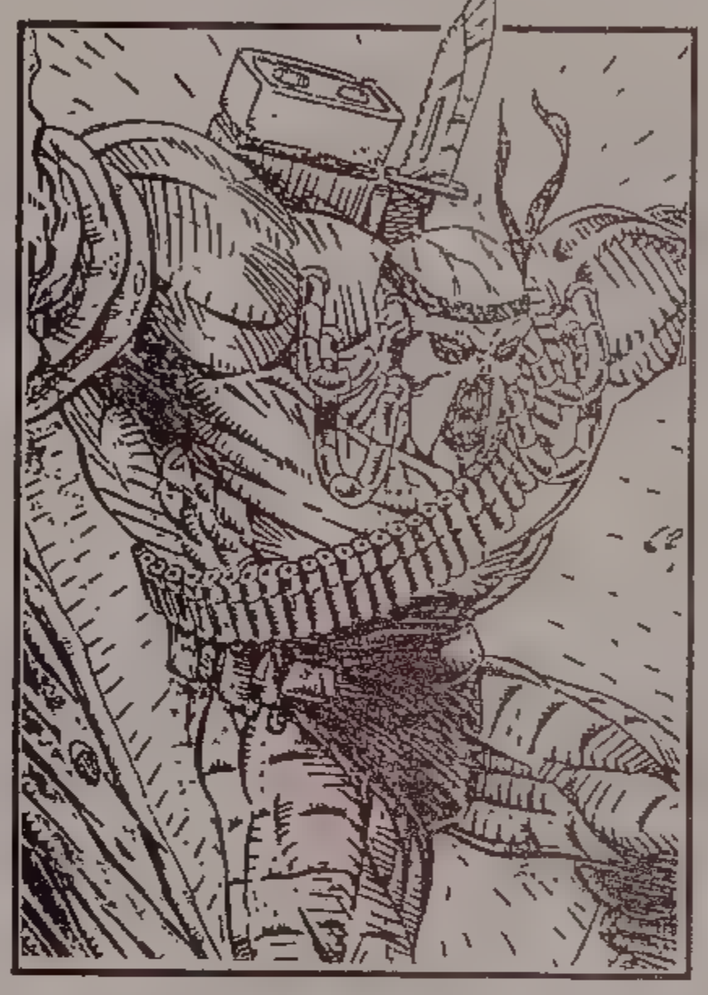
This is the first issue of Archie's *Merdude* 3-issue mini-series, wherein the two-fisted fish teams with some of the TMNT Universe's fiercest competitors (Mondo Gecko in #2 and Ray Fillet in #3)! Featuring the return of Armaggon and the monstrous threat of Kraken! Scripting is by Dan Berger with art by Michael Gaydos.



Atomeka News

Monster Massacre

With the biggest names in comics, this is the launch of the premier series of '93. BIG monsters, BIG guns, BIG holes being blown into BIGGER monsters. This will be the BIGGEST book of the month! Over the summer, *Monster Massacre* will spawn a six-issue series and three prestige format specials: *Necro Nightmares*, *Carnosaur Carnage*, and *Hardware Havoc* plus it premieres four new characters by Bisley in the super team of the year. Artists and writers include: Dan Abnett, Ian Edginton, Dave Elliott, Warren Ellis, Gary Erskine, Glenn Fabry, Pedro Henry, John Higgins, Garry Leach, and Walt Simonson. And Atomeka has some the special surprises in the works. All you need to worry about is 'Have you ordered enough?'. If you haven't, you'll be sorry.



Blue Comet News

With the recent release of *Windraven Adventures #1* the association of Blue Comet Press and Heroic Publishing has been consummated. *Windraven Adventures #1* again shows BCP has been able to retain high quality in its art and stories, by artists that are very popular, and still be invisible to the comic's direct market. The artist for the highly advertised *Dinosaurs For Hire*, Mitch Byrd's pencils kick off the book. Then the penciller for *Evil Ernie*, Steven Hughes's pencils are displayed in the second 10-page story. And the last introductory *Origin of Iron Cupcake* story is penciled by Richard Bonk, a hot BCP newcomer! And the

biggest secret is two pin-ups by *Youngblood*'s creator/artist Rob Liefeld! The whole book is inked by Craig A. Stormon, regular inker for the super popular Heroic Publishing's *Tigress*!

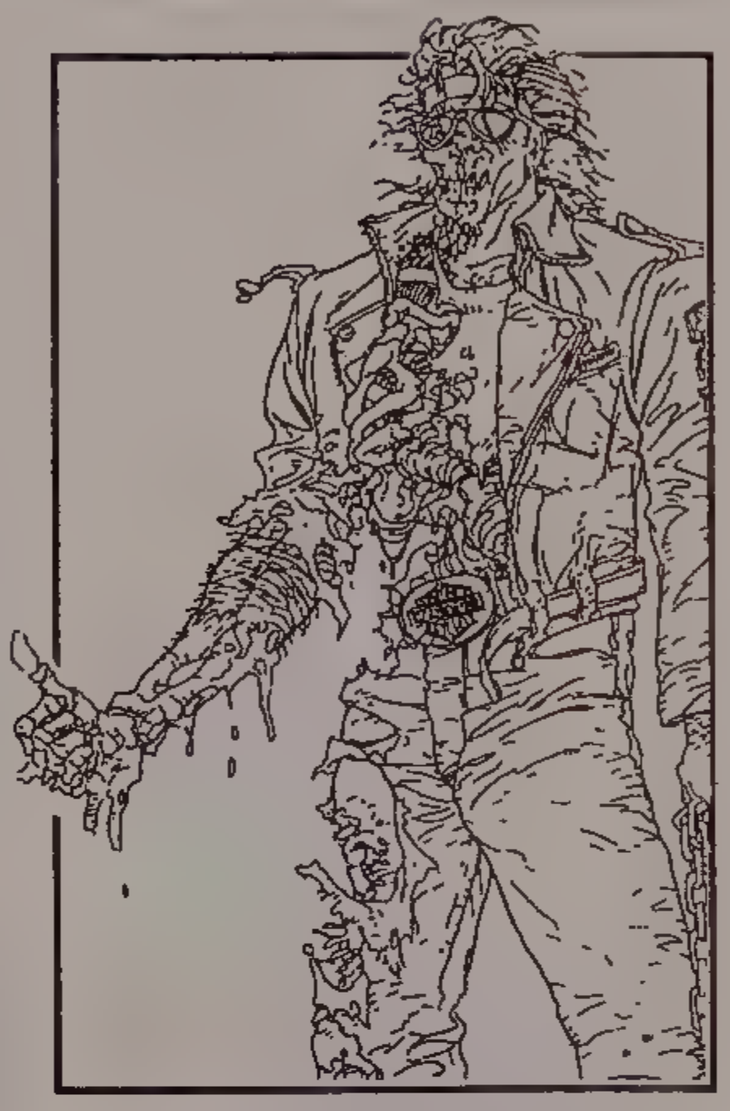
Windraven Adventures #1, Limited Edition, including a BCP trading card, and certificate of authenticity, and all signed in gold (on the cover) by creator/writer Craig Stormon, will be offered for early summer '93!

Also for early summer release will be *The Bladesmen, Limited Edition, #0* with wrap-around cover by Dell Barras, super popular Marvel UK artist for *Death's Head II*! *Bladesmen, L.E., #0* will have two complete stories with pencils by *Evil Ernie* artist Steven Hughes, and inks by Stormon. At this time it's still being decided, but gold stamp titles are a probability. Also included will be two trading cards, by the fabulous artist of *Faust*, Tim Vigil! The two Vigil drawings will also have pin-ups included with 39 pages of story. The *Bladesmen, Limited Edition, #0* will be 44 black, gray, and white pages, with gold stamped wrap-around cover for $4.95.

Other Blue Comet Press books in production include *Deathrow Vs. X-187* in "Turf Wars" 3 issue mini-series. Artists are hot newcomers Tom Lee, Tony Santini, and Mario Chevez on pencils, each doing a 10-page chapter, with inking by Craig Stormon on all 3 to keep some continuity on the artwork. Stormon also writes the series, and cover artists are Dell Barras and Tim Vigil, with one artist still undecided on. Trading cards will be included as well as a limited edition signed by all four artists. More information will be forth coming on the *Turf Wars* mini-series, as things get further along.

Caliber News

Dave Dorman Does Deadworld



Coming in the next month or so, Caliber will be launching an all new Deadworld companion series titled *Deadworld Chronicles*. Each issue will be a stand alone story that will be placed in the realm of the Deadworld. Additionally, each issue will feature a different creative team. The formats may vary for each issue and if will not be put on a specific schedule.

Leading off this new series will be one of the premier artists in comics today, Dave Dorman. Dorman is mainly known for his incredible cover work and the Aliens hardcover graphic novel, *Aliens: Tribes*. Dorman will illustrate in black and white a story from science fiction/horror writer Del Stone, Jr. The story will feature Dorman's character, Hitch, that Dorman initially used on the first issue jam cover of the new Deadworld series.

Deadworld Chronicles will tie into the continuity of the *Deadworld* series although it may not feature the main characters from the series itself. More one shots are being discussed and Caliber will release information on the series as they come closer to scheduling. According to Publisher Gary Reed, a series of this type will allow many creators who would like to do an issue of *Deadworld* but have trouble committing to a specific schedule a chance to contribute.

In Black, White, and Red

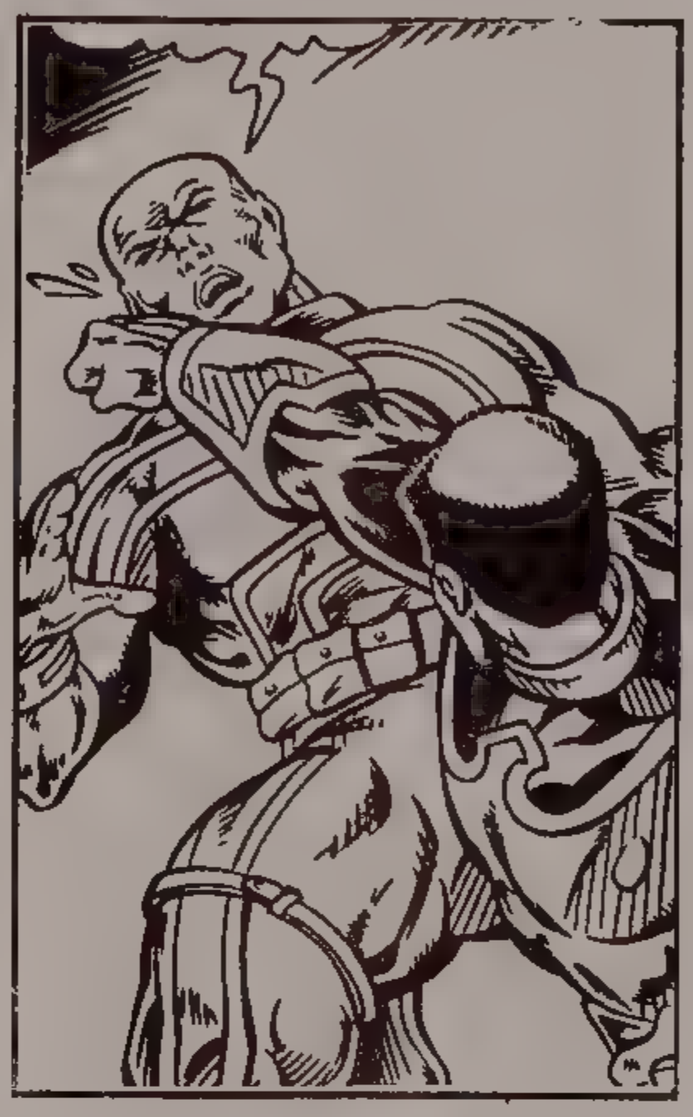
All out action in a full 32 pages of duo-shade in black, white, and RED in the premiere issue of *Gutter Rat*! This two color comic kicks off this new series from *Vampirella* writer Tom Sniegoski and artist Mark (*Shar-Pei*) Masztal that has the title character leading the homeless in a battle to save the innocent against the new religious force ready to sweep the country. Can Gutter Rat be the sword of vengeance and maintain his own sanity? A unique looking series that really utilizes the additional red plate as part of the artwork plus Sniegoski's tight scripting should make this a fan favorite.

Big Doings

In case you missed the launch, here's the instant replay.

Foundation Studios is currently producing seven full color monthly titles for Gauntlet Comics imprint publisher, Caliber Press. Our first monthly color series, *U.N. Force*, which premiered in early February, has gone ballistic! The largest international team ever assembled (25 heroes from 19 nations) has attracted the attention of the international press. The book's creators Brent Dorian Carpenter and Paul J. Kowalski were interviewed by no less than CNN, during which the book's intense international, topical, and educational nature was prominently featured. It ran March 3rd and 4the on CNN and Headline News. Book stores around the country reported that their phones began ringing off the hooks immediately following. Both versions of the first issue, the regular $2.95 edition and the signed and numbered limited $5.95 edition, sold out wherever they were available! Reorders of the first, second, and third issues have been heavy, exceeding reorders of all previous Caliber Press titles. Mind you, these reorders were placed two weeks before the CNN piece ran! A second printing of the first issue has been solicited for June.

Based on sales of *U.N. Force #1*, orders for *U.N. Force #4* soared 600% over sales of issue #3! Similar numbers also came in for the spin-off titles *U.N. Force #0* and *Paradigm #1*, as well as *Force #5* and *Files #1*, May issues which were solicited simultaneously with the April books. Again, these numbers came in two weeks before the CNN piece ran, and have not yet begun to reflect the enormous backlash expected from that! Already, prices on the Limited Edition have soared as high as $25.



Chaos News

He's big. He's bad. He's baaaaack! Trapped in Limbo, "Evil" is...dead. What can the ravishing Lady Death do to resurrect him? The answer leads to a newer, bigger, badder *Evil Ernie*, who's hell-bent on the destruction of Wahington, D.C.! Can Dr. Price, Evil's vigilante psycho-therapist, stop him? As an added bonus, this debut issue features a tantalizing full-color Lady Death centerfold by Jim (*From the Darkness*) Balent, and a cover by Joe (*X-Factor, Sword of Azrael, Crucible*) Quesada!

Dark Horse News

Aliens: Sacrifice

Collecting the story originally serialized in Dark Horse U.K.'s *Aliens* title, *Aliens: Sacrifice* is a one-shot presenting perhaps the most emotionally powerful *Aliens* tale you will ever read. Stranded on an isolated planet, Ann McKay takes shelter in a remote village that is being terrorized by an Alien. She soon discovers that its inhabitants are hiding a horrifying secret from her. But to discover the truth she has to face her own innermost demons, and try to save the souls of the villagers at the same time.

Peter Milligain's exciting and complex script gets to the heart of the *Aliens* mythology, and Paul Johnson's fully painted artwork perfectly captures the mood and mystery of the films.

Accident Man

Got a problem that needs fixing? Permanent fixing? Call Mike Fallon, a.k.a. Accident Man. He can arrange a discreet,

unsuspicious and entirely unavoidable accident for the victim of your choice -- if you can afford his fee, of course.

In this issue, Fallon meets the beautiful Mirror Morgan, and gets himself embroiled in an intrigue that involves sex, shopping, and several suspicious fatalities. This is the story we just had to call "Sex 'n' Death".

DC News

Never Say Die

From DC's Vertigo line comes *The Last One*, a captivating tale of the last in a long line of immortal beings, who's lost his lust for life. From the Dark Ages to the present day, Myrwann has lived among us, sometimes as a man, sometimes as a woman, always guiding along the forsaken.

But now, ancient beyond imagining and weary beyond conception, Myrwann's existence goes into a tailspin. Driven by a force he doesn't understand, the once benevolent being becomes something much darker. In issue #1 we meet Myrwann and his family of "Lost Souls" on the streets of the East Village. But, the magic that Myrwann bestows upon a strung-out junkie is lost to the immortal himself. As Myrwann looks to his past for understanding, the reader moves with him on a harrowing journey from lower Manhattan to medieval Europe, from today's mean streets to the alleys of Victorian England. And his journey back into the depths of his previous lives has just begun.

Written by J.M. (*Mercy*, *Moonshadow*, *Blood*) DeMatteis, with exquisite, fully-painted artwork by Dan (*Beautiful Stories For Ugly Children* and Spy Magazine) Sweetman, *The Last One* weaves the past and present into a strangely beautiful tapestry of the human spirit...and other spirits as well.

Death of Batman?

These days, the ol' Dark Knight just ain't what he used to be. With his razor-sharp intellect dulled by over-extension and his body ravaged by years of strain and abuse, Bruce Wayne -- once an unassailable paragon of modern-day prairie justice -- has simply reached the end of his Bat-rope. He's not fed up; he's just plain tired.

Which, naturally, has made him the perfect target for a series of brutally obsessive attacks by the one man who may indeed put Batman in a cave...permanently: the ruthless Bane.

But soon, things are going to get really nasty!

When the inmates of Arkham Asylum explode from their shadowy confines, the Caped Crusader is forced to begin a long day's journey into "Knightfall" -- a 22-part storyline (beginning in *Batman #492*) -- which culminates in *Batman #500* (scheduled to ship on August 31st).

For love of the (Bat)man he used to be: Please don't miss it!

Defiant News

Defiant New Concept

The next-wave in trading cards is coming and it's been bio-engineered by a genuine legend. Comic book industry icon Jim Shooter, and his new company -- the aptly named Defiant -- announced their new universe of superheroes in the form of a limited-edition, 150-trading-card set manufactured and distributed by The River Group. The *Plasm Zero Issue Trading Card Set* marks the first time that a comics universe has ever debuted in the form of trading cards.

Ever the innovator, Shooter designed the card set to be read as a comic book. Collectors can place the cards in numerical order in nine-pocket plastic sheets and read *Plasm #0* -- the "back-

story" that introduces Defiant's world of Plasm. A limited-edition binder, to be sold separately but designed exclusively for the set, will also be available. Cards and binders will go on sale in June. The first *Plasm* comic book will be published in August.

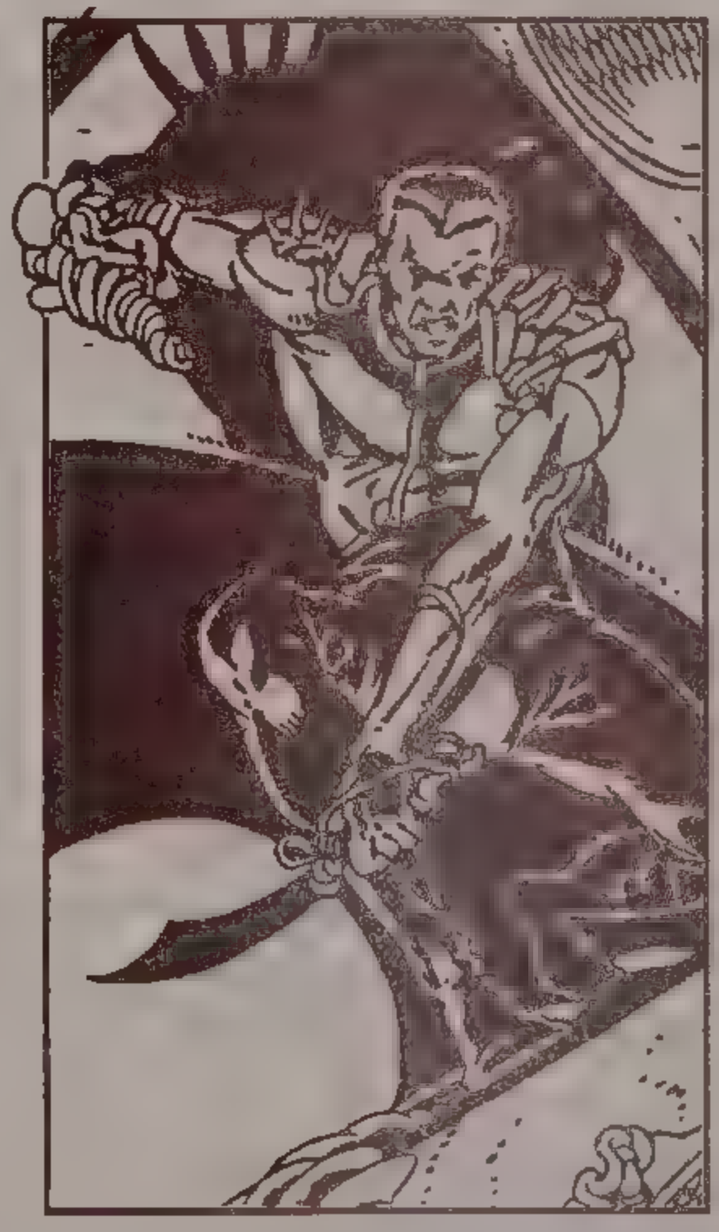
"We're storytellers first, last, and always," says Shooter, the 41-year old former Editor-in-Chief of Marvel Comics and creative force behind Valiant and its Unity story line. "The card set gave us the chance to work with the medium -- to stretch the boundaries. This is not a gimmick, and it's not anything you've seen before. It is the next revolution in trading cards; a fabulous story that fans will want to own."

Created and written by Shooter, the card set features the collaborative art work of the best in the industry. The art is created by "penciller" David Lapham -- well known for his work on *Harbinger, H.A.R.D. Corps,* and *RAI* -- and "inker" Michael Witherby who previously worked for Marvel. Color is added to the art by Janet Jackson -- former "head colorist" for *Harbinger* and *Magnus Robot Fighter.* "I've brought together the folks I love to work with," Shooter explains.

The set introduces *Plasm* -- the cornerstone of the new Defiant universe. *Plasm* is a world separated from Earth by a "nanosecond-thin reality veil," according to its creator. It is a place that is entirely organic: Technology is advanced but bio-systemic. In short, everything is alive, even things that seem to be machines.

"We asked ourselves, what if you had complete control of genetic engineering?" Shooter says. "What would the social mores be? Everything would be recycled: Murder would be a misdemeanor, but failure to recycle would be a capital offense. There is a callousness toward death in *Plasm* society that is overwhelming. *Plasm* is brutal and horrifying to the sensibilities of our kind, and even to some of their kind. One such is Lorca, a high-ranking Non-Zom, or freethinker, in the military."

"Lorca discovers the dimensional barrier to Earth, brings 10,000 Earthlings across the barrier and genetically re-engineers them to form a super-army to spearhead a revolution. Haste makes for a miscalculation, and only five survive: A middle-aged housewife, a one-armed working man, a soldier, a college girl, and an Episcopal minister. Fearing defeat, Lorca turns on them, but underestimates both the power he's given them and a power he doesn't fully understand, the power of the human spirit."



The *Plasm #0* story will be told on 117 of the 150 cards that make up the complete set. The remaining 33 cards will introduce the extraordinary and visually outrageous characters who populate the *Plasm* universe. The cards will be protected with a glossy, ultraviolet coating. Packs of nine cards will be sold for a suggested retail price of 99 cents per pack.

"I'm very excited about this project," says Shooter. "Think about it -- two forms of entertainment becoming one. Defiant is the greatest odyssey I've ever been on, and this marriage of trading cards and comics is a fabulous beginning."

Fleetway News

A DreddWorld Tale

Young girls have been disappearing in Brit-Cit at an alarming rate, and the undercover vice Judges have been called out to get to the bottom of it all. One of them, Judge Shea, has a secret weapon all her own -- pyrokinetic powers. When things get a little too hot, she can turn up the heat even more! Whether that's going to be enough to fight the pimp called "Iceman" remains to be seen.

Brit-Cit Babes by John Wagner and Steve Sampson contains

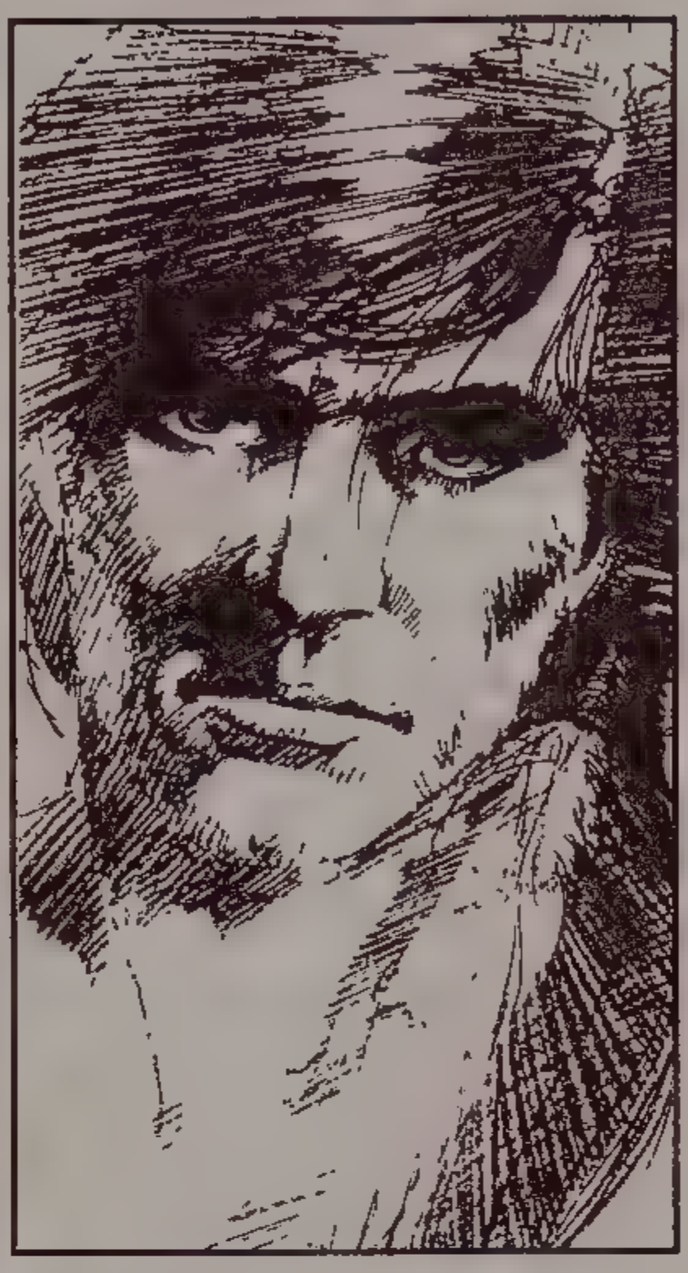
Image News

material never before published in the U.S. in fully painted color. Also features a drop-dead gorgeous full color cover by the one-and-only Brian Bolland!

From SQP

One of the most sought-after fantasy gaming illustrators in the business and an all-time fan favorite, Larry Elmore is a true original. Now, for the first time ever, he opens a very private part of his life and show the work that goes into his masterpieces. *Reflections of Myth* is filled-to-overflowing with sketches, studies, and finished pieces that bring new insight into the career of this most gifted individual. Elmore himself supplies a commentary on his craft, and his candid approach is both amusing and refreshing. If you marvel at the wonder of painting and illustration, then this book will offer you a new window into its mysteries!

Reflections of Myth -- The Larry Elmore Sketchbook Volume One is in black and white and is squarebound with full color laminated board covers. Retails for $9.95.



Grell Strikes Again

Mike Grell's latest superhero creation, *Shaman's Tears*, debuts from Image Comics this month in a mind shattering tale of an American's Rite of Passage from ordinary citizen to superhero extraordinaire. But can even the newest Image hero stand up against the might of the demihuman hordes of a super-scientific paramilitary corporation? Can the creator of *Jon Sable, Freelance*, *The Warlord*, and the man who rescued Green Arrow from obscurity pull off the bloodiest and most heart-wrenching story in his career?

Shaman's Tears #1, a new monthly written and drawn by Mike Grell, ships in May from Image Comics.

Showdown

In *Spawn #13*, Spawn and his killer (Chapel from *Youngblood*) square off in this battle that takes both heroes to the spot where Spawn's alter ego was killed five years ago. Youngblood makes a short cameo as the answers to "who killed Spawn?" come to a decisive conclusion in this tale that ties in with the new *Youngblood: Strikefile* book *#1*.

Out From the Trenches

Trencher is an all new on-going monthly series chronicling the over-the-top travails of one Gideon Trencher, working "stiff" extraordinaire. Trencher's job is to re-possess misplaced or errant re-incarnated souls...by any means necessary. Unfortunately for him, the advent of the superhuman has tended to complicate what was already a pretty sucky job. Trencher...if not already dead, would kill himself.

Things Are Getting Stupid

Joining the Image Comics line of blockbusters is their new idiot cousin, *Stupid*. In issue #1 of *Stupid*, the veteran comic-book spoof team of Hillary Barta and Doug Rice have perpetrated a new and funny take on *Spawn*. Future issues will feature the en-

tire Image pantheon of stars...whether they like it or not! Barta and Rice (of *Plastic Man* and *What The-?*) will round out each issue of their new quarterly title with an original piece that they have been saving up for just the right time...and now Image is stuck with it! Adding to the high-quality mayhem of Image Comics may sound *Stupid*, but they're gonna do it anyway!

ShadowHawk Revealed

The police want him arrested! The criminals want him to join them! He can't imagine how all of them have misunderstood his mission! While he deals with Vendetta and her band of super villains, a ShadowHawk "copy-cat" prowls the city! And if that wasn't bad enough the mayor has hired the world's greatest assassin, Slaughter, to kill him! The action begins in *ShadowHawk #1*, coming this May!

Youngblood Yet Again

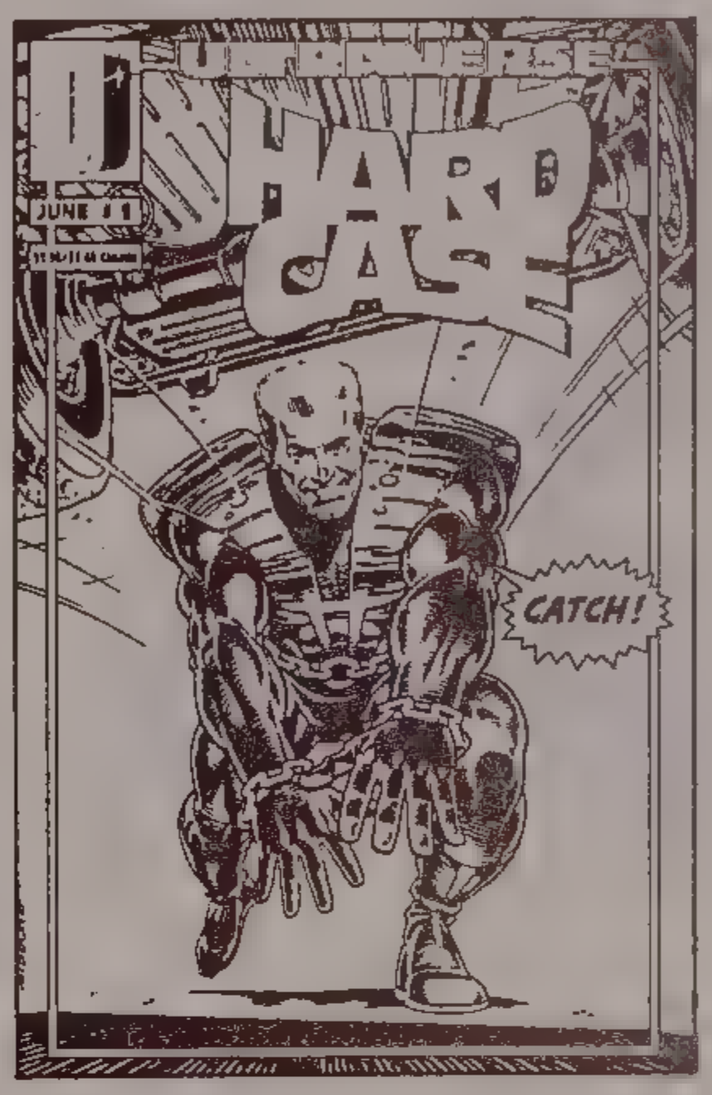
Featuring a dynamic four page fold-out, *Youngblood Yearbook #1* follows the adventures of the adventures of the Youngblood Away Team as they investigate the disappearance of a CIA remote team based in Antarctica. What they discover is a time-lost world within a world ruled by the bloodthirsty Tyrax and his legion of cyborg barbarians! Plus, a Youngblood pin-up gallery including work by Kevin Maguire, Jason Pearson, Dusty Abell, and more!

Malibu News

Ultra Info

Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc. will be producing the industries first ever fully holographic cover comics for each of its first seven #1 Ultaverse issues. The first three in the set of seven will be offered in June 1993.

For every one hundred copies that you order you are eligible to purchase one hologram comic cover. This edition will have the same interiors as the regular direct market version but will have one of the first ever fully holographic covers (not just a hologram sticker that fits in the middle of the cover).

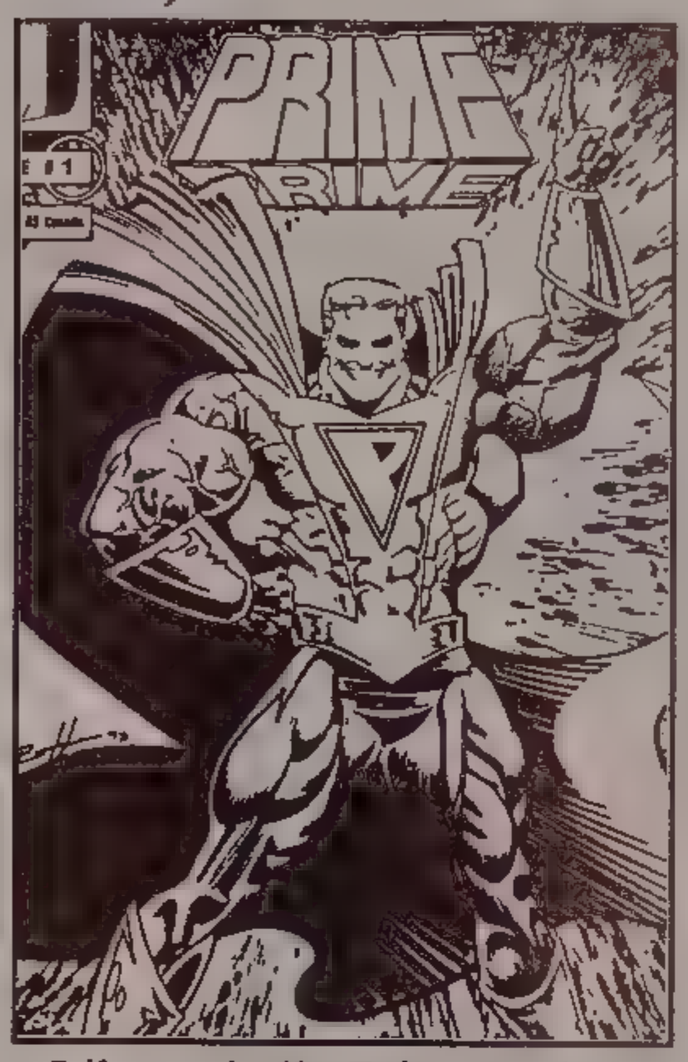


In *Hardcase #1*, Hardcase has had some tough breaks. His old team, the Squad, was destroyed by a biomechanical monster, leaving two members dead and the third, the super-heroine Starburst, in a coma. Hardcase blames himself for this disaster even though to the rest of the world, he is the man who has everything. He has become an action movie star -- a hero in name only. Will Hardcase regain his confidence in time to stop a super-powered psychopath? Or will there be even more blood on his hands?

Hardcase #1 features first appearances of the following Ultraverse characters: Hardcase, Forsa, D.J. Blast!, Starburst, Headknocker, and NM-E.

In addition to the upcoming Skybox Ultraverse trading card set which will include *Hardcase*, Malibu Comics is working in association with MTV film director Darren Doane on an upcoming *Hardcase* film short featuring British kickboxing champion and action star Gary Daniels (known for his work on Jackie

Chan's latest feature *City Hunter*).



Like a missile, Prime exploded on the scene. Able to fly at supersonic speeds, shed bullets like raindrops and punch his way through a battleship, Prime begins a one man crusade against crime. He's the man of the hour, the idol of millions, the inspiration for generation -- and secretly, a thirteen-year-old boy.

Prime #1 features the first appearance of Prime as well as a guest cameo of Prototype (watch for *Prototype #1* in August!). In addition to the upcoming Skybox Ultraverse trading card set, *Prime* is now in development as a video game by Malibu Interactive.

Known most recently for his work on the Batman as the regular artist on *Detective Comics* for DC, Norm Breyfogle is handling all the art chores on *Prime*. With sixteen years of experience, Norm has also worked on *Tales of Terror* for Eclipse, *Whisper* for First Comics, and has his own project, *Metaphysique*, currently in development with Malibu Comics.

In *The Strangers #1*, it is a Thursday morning at a quarter to nine, on the Powell Street Hill, in San Francisco. Fifty-nine strangers are riding a cable car on their way to work when a bolt of mysterious energy surrounds the car and irrevocably changes each one of the passengers, giving each one ultrahuman abilities. Some die instantly, their bodies unable to handle the strain. Others feel completely unaffected, the changes too small to feel. Some will become heroes, some villains. Confronted by a mysterious sorceress from the clouds who holds the key to unlocking this "jumpstart" event, six strangers join together to solve the secret of their origin -- even if it means a fight to the death!

The Strangers #1, by Steve Englehart and Rick Hoburg, features first appearances of the following Ultraverse characters: Atom Bob, Electrocute, Grenade, Lady Killer, Spectral, Yrial, Zip Zap, and the secret origin of Nightman. Not to mention the other 53 ultrahuman passengers who will be appearing throughout the Ultraverse.

Rough, Tough, Big, and Buff

Are you ready to rumble, or at least ready to read? Then pick up the 45th issue of *Electronic Gaming Monthly* coming out this April, because your favorite bad boys and girl of the street are on the cover! *EGM #45* will feature a special promotion to tie in directly with the May release of Malibu Comics' *Street Fighter #1*.

As if that weren't enough, *Street Fighter* has become *EGM*'s special double feature to be covered in both April and May issues. "We are very excited about this," *EGM* editor Ed Semrad said. "We wanted to be the first magazine to feature the hottest video game gone comic." In fact, it's the international video game gone comic. And that makes it more than exciting. "It's awesome!" said Semrad.

Everybody involved is hyped and looking forward to the biggest video game in the world appearing Malibu style. Malibu Marketing Director Alan Payne said, "At this point in Malibu's history, this is our largest promotional push with lots of prizes and exposure. We've got three stand-up arcade games, 30 Nintendo games and signed preview books and covers just itching to be given away." Having *Electronic Gaming Monthly* feature the comic is only the start.

The *EGM* coverage is a unique opportunity. It takes typical gaming features one step beyond -- beyond the characters, beyond the action, beyond the game. "It goes beyond the static adventure which exists in one point in time and adds more variety to the most popular characters in video history," Semrad said. "This will let the gamers see more about the lives, background, and ongoing stories of their favorite fighters." When asked if he thought the gamers were going to like seeing their favorite *Street Fighters* in comic pages, Semrad answered, "They're going to eat it up!"

And why shouldn't they? The books creative team is pumped for the action. Writer Len Strazewski said, "It's pretty exciting to have our comic appear in *EGM*." To prepare for writing the series, Strazewski did a little poking around himself, talking to gamers. "It's cool to see them excited about the comic and nice to gave them a free sample," he said. "It's another point of reference, another way to get even more involved in the most involving game on Earth."

Electronic Gaming Monthly's feature of Malibu's *Street Fighter* comic is a milestone in the entertainment industry. It's a first step in a long line of fighting fun to come. So take Balrog's advice, all you *Street Fighter* fans, and "Get up, you wimp!" to go buy your double issues of *EGM* this spring, and don't miss the comic debut from Malibu in May!

Marvel News

Re-Enter: Magneto

It was thirty years ago this year that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby introduced five "gifted youngsters" (and their mentor) who would grow to become one of the most popular super-teams in the industry. Of course, we're referring to the *X-Men*, and 1993 marks their 30th anniversary. To commemorate this X-tra ceremonious occasion, each of the X-titles shipping this spring will feature a special cover banner alerting readers to a special bonus inside – a free insert describing the exciting events and books you can enjoy as part of this summer's X-Men Anniversary extravaganza! It all begins in *X-Factor #92* -- which officially launches the festivities! Did we mention the X-Men holographic covers on every anniversary issue? Or the mystery surrounding the supposed return of Magneto? And how about that special *X-Men/Avengers* team-up? Get ready for an anniversary bash to beat all others – *X-Men* style!

Hulk (2099) Smashes

Meet the Incredible Hulk – 2099 style, that is -- in Marvel's forthcoming *2099 Unlimited #1*, the first of many *2099* action-fests winging your way four times on high-quality Fanfare stock, this jam-packed first issue marks the debut of the aforementioned Jolly Green Giant – who, in case you're wondering, looks absolutely nothing like the Maestro. An all new adventure starring everyone's favorite futuristic outlaw-with-an-attitude -- *Spider-man 2099* -- rounds out the package.

2099 Unlimited #1 is scheduled to ship on May 4th, 1993.

Rip Off News

Mara of the Celts

She's back! The lithe and lovely Mara rules triumphant in the halls of her old enemy Da-Kur, whose head she keeps as a talisman. Drunken with delight and aleberry wine, she regales her new friends with tales of her adventures: how she was schooled to new heights of erotic magic by the witch Alison; how she was captured and enslaved by a band of evil DeSakeans, who chained her for their twisted desires; and how, on escaping them, she exchanged sanctuary in the land of Lesbos for a voluntary and more pleasant servitude. Mara's mystical powers increase all the while, as she studies in the City's ancient library and learns to tap the deep forces of her arousal through the secrets of her Celtic ancestors.

This Special Number One Issue launches an all-new series for

Mara, whose earlier adventures appeared in four issues during 1991. Now coming to you from Rip Off Press, from a tradition of fine adult comix going back twenty-four years!

Special Offer: Artist Dennis Cramer has announced that he will send a free original panel or thumbnail sketch from the *Mara* series to each reader who writes to him requesting one. (Art will be sent in postpaid, self-addressed envelope or tube furnished by the reader. Limited to one per customer.)

Taylor News

Illustrated Crime

Sherlock Holmes. Bonnie and Clyde. Dick Tracy. Charlie Chan. Pretty Boy Floyd. Peter Gunn. The Untouchables. Perry Mason. Al Capone. The Saint. The Man From UNCLE. All your favorites are reviewed here in outrageous detail! With tongue definitely in cheek Mike Benton takes an entertaining look at this visually exciting category of comics from the first public broadsheets of the 15th century (illustrating the grisly details of executions and crimes) to the Roaring '20's, through the private-eye fad of the '50's, and back full-circle to Sherlock Holmes comics being published today -- to the delight of a whole new generation of fans.

With over 300 full-color illustrations (yes, you can see what The Shadow really looked like without having your mind clouded!) and panel art, plus a complete checklist of every crime comic ever published, *Crime Comics* gives mystery fans and comic collectors just what they're looking for. So don't miss out -- as Charlie Chan says, "Grocer who stack detergent on top shelf will soon be jumping for Joy!"

Mike Benton is the author of *The Comic Book in America*, as well as four previous volumes in the "Taylor History of Comics" series: *Horror Comics, Superhero Comics of the Silver Age* (runner-up in the 1991 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards for Best Book Publication of the Year), *Science Fiction Comics,* and *Superhero Comics of the Golden Age*. He lives in central Texas, where he has been known to wax his moustache, practice a Belgian accent, and periodically exercise his "little gray cells."

Valiant News

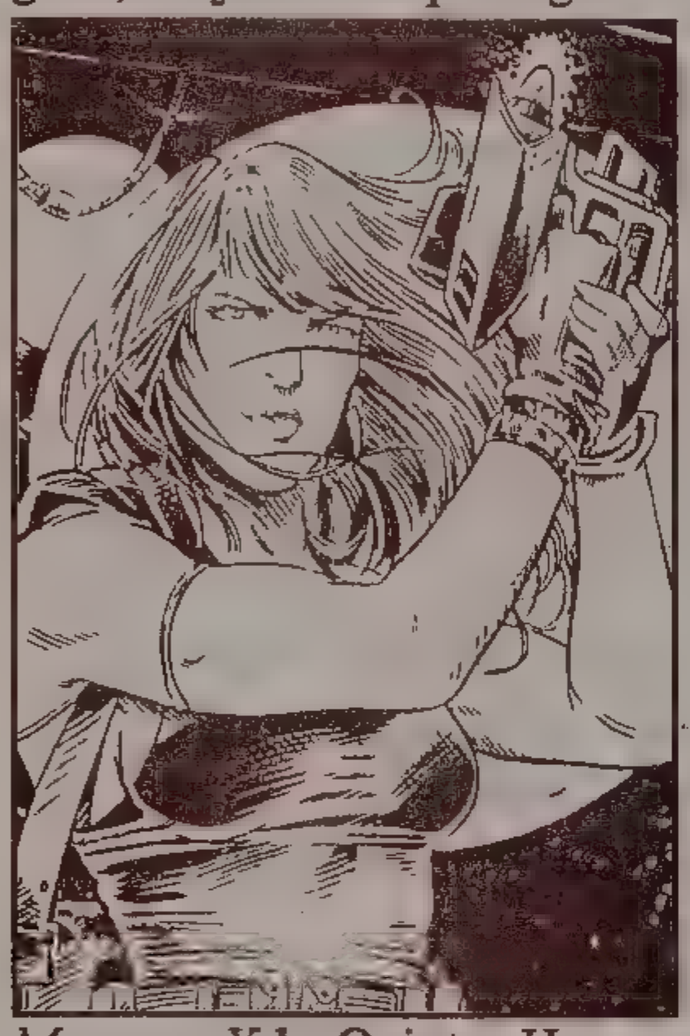
X-O Month Mania

Bob Layton wants you to buy *X-O*. Heck, we want you to buy *X-O*! Then why not make everyone happy by tuning into Valiant's *X-O* Month celebration? In May, Valiant salutes their violent Visigoth with the *X-O Trade Paperback* (collecting *X-O #1-4*, plus the special *X-O Sourcebook* polybagged with the trade) and *X-O #0* (a special issue recounting all the "pre-history" material that took place before the events chronicled in *X-O #1*)! Also: Look for *X-O Manowar #19* (featuring the debut of the new creative team), as well as three new licensed X-O products from Planet Studios -- including a replica of Aric's *X-O* command ring (quite cool)! If your customers like action and adventure (and plenty of it), help them to suit up with Valiant's *X-O* for the ride of their lives!

Sky Comics News

Sky Comics has announced its upcoming list of publications for the remainder of '93.

Leading into the summer, Sky is releasing the one shot titles *Race Danger* and *Morgana X*. *Race Danger #1* features work by newcomers Dwayne Haddix, Dan Lauer and Chris Leidenfrost and features high action with souped-up race cars, guns, ninjas and espionage!



Morgana X, by Quinton Hoover and Allen (*Speed Racer*) Freeman is set in the future and introduces Morgana, a female bounty hunter who is damn good at what she does. This title preludes a bi-monthly six-issue miniseries that begins in September and if you haven't seen the art, these guys are hot! These two books ship in June and are black and white and herald the onslaught of Sky Comics's heavy hitters!

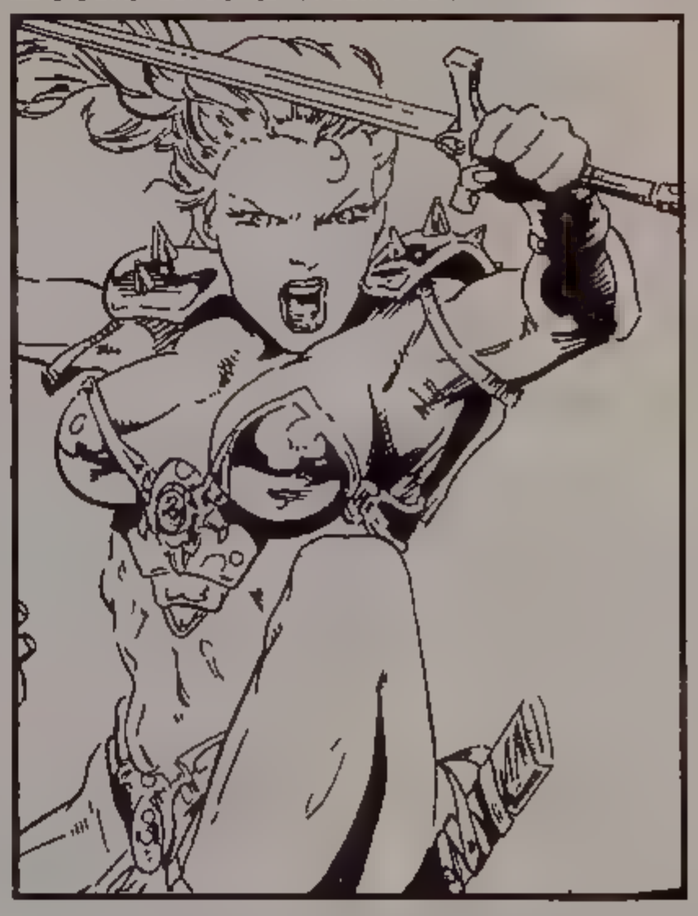
What heavy hitters? In August, look for *Seeker: Vengeance* in full color by Joe Martin, Willie (*Southern Knights*) Peppers and Allen Freeman. It's dark and gritty, "superhero-sorta" action as FBI Agent Tracy Lemaster is inhabited by the spirit-form of a long dead sorcerer to enact vengeance on her

fiancee's murderer. She takes on the guise of the Seeker, busts a lot of windows and busts a lot of heads. Visually, this is one of Sky's coolest characters and will be followed by a three-issue miniseries, *Seeker: Faith and Corruption*, by Joe Martin, Willie Peppers and Chris Leidenfrost in a style very similar to Marc Silvestri's *CyberForce*.and features covers by Franchesco (*Green Lantern Corps Quarterly*).

Also in August, look for the full color *Blood & Roses: Search For The Timestone #1*, the story of two "drop-dead" gorgeous femme fatales from different timestreams brought together by the mysterious Time Lords to make things right. The first two-issue miniseries is brought to you by newcomers Jerry Smith, Bob Hickey, Gene Gonzales and Chris Leidenfrost with excellent fully painted covers by Daerick (*Necroscope, Batman*) Gross and will be followed by a second two-issue color miniseries, *Blood & Roses: Future Past Tense*, featuring the works of Bob Hickey, Jery Smith and Brad (*FemForce, Parts Unknown*) Gorby who is one of the hottest "unknown" artists in comics today. His females will literally knock your socks off! This miniseries features beautiful fully painted covers by Lurene (*Green Arrow, Cat People*) Haines.

Other forthcoming titles from Sky Comics include *Talislanta's Rune: Wizard-Hunter* by Stephan Sechi and Ron Spencer, based on the popular role-playing game, *Talislanta* and distributed by Wizards of the Coast; *Ashley Dust* by Rick (*TMNT*) McCollum, a story about a "necroborg" who can commune with the dead and is torn between mysticism and technology; *Tempered Steele* by Bob Hickey, Don (*Streetfighter*) Hillsman II and Chris Leidenfrost, Sky's premiere superhero whose world becomes a whirwind of aliens, supervillains and girlfriend problems; *Dead Kid* by Tom and Mary (*Legionnaires, Legion of Superheroes*) Bierbaum and Bill Nichols, a "dark humor-action-superhero" story that will have you reeling with shouts of surprise and howls of laughter!

With professional names like Daerick Gross, Tom and Mary Bierbaum, Lurene Haines, Don Hillsman, Rick McCollum, Franchesco, Willie Peppers, Brad Gorby and Allen Freeman and hot newcomers like Quinton Hoover, Chris Leidenfrost, Stephan Sechi, Ron Spencer, Gene Gonzales, Bob Hickey, Bill Nichols and Joe Martin, how can Sky not fly high? Beats us. Looks like a winner!



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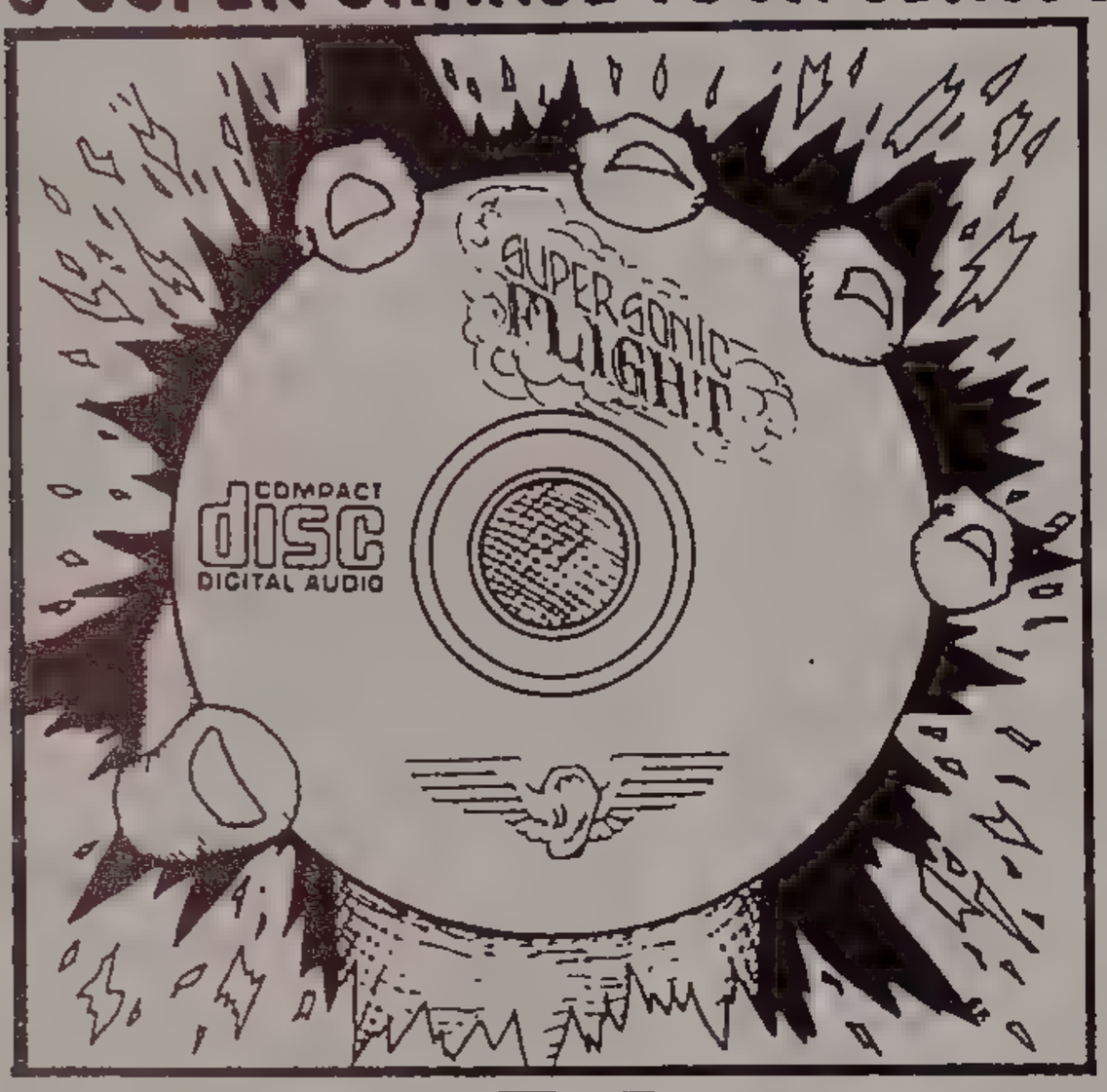

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TODAY'S EARFORCE

Comic News FLASH

Hanthercraft News

He stands 7'6", has an oversized nose, and a belly that protrudes most noticeably. His name is Yousles and he has remained in the background until now!

Her skin is midnight black and cream white...half and half, divided precisely down the center of her body. Her natural element is the boudoir. She is called Delta and she has never been content to remain in the background!

Some days the mundane world crowds in upon you with its dreary oppressive dullness! You long to escape the gray monotony of the endless work-a-day grind.

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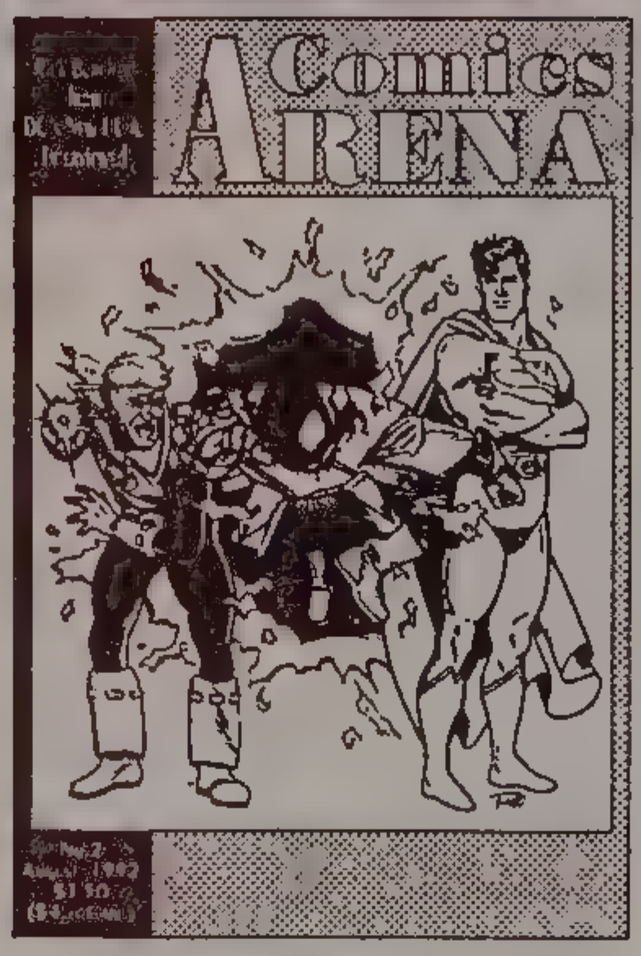

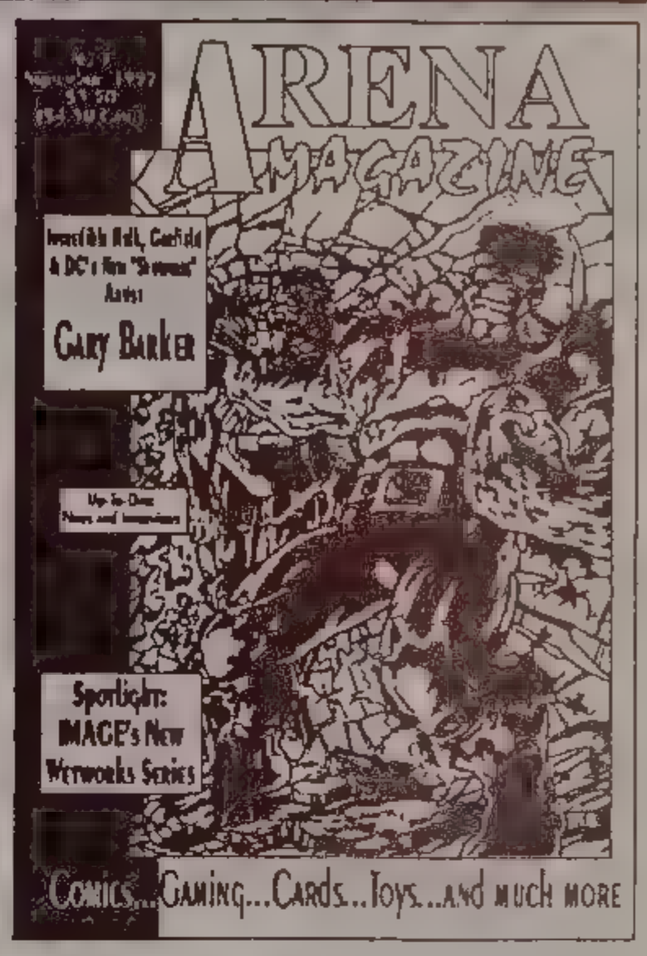

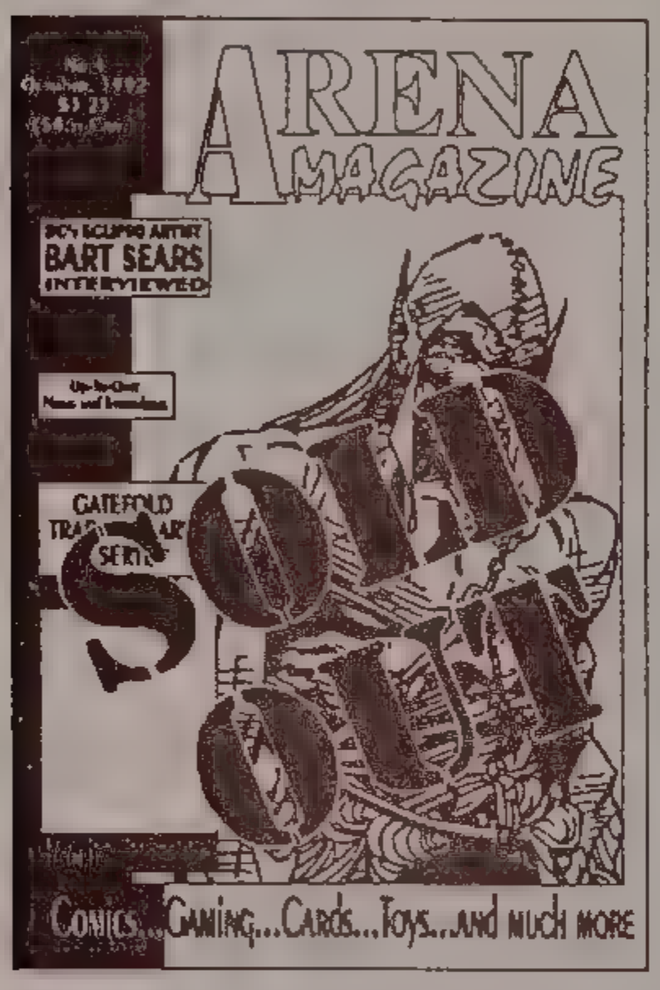

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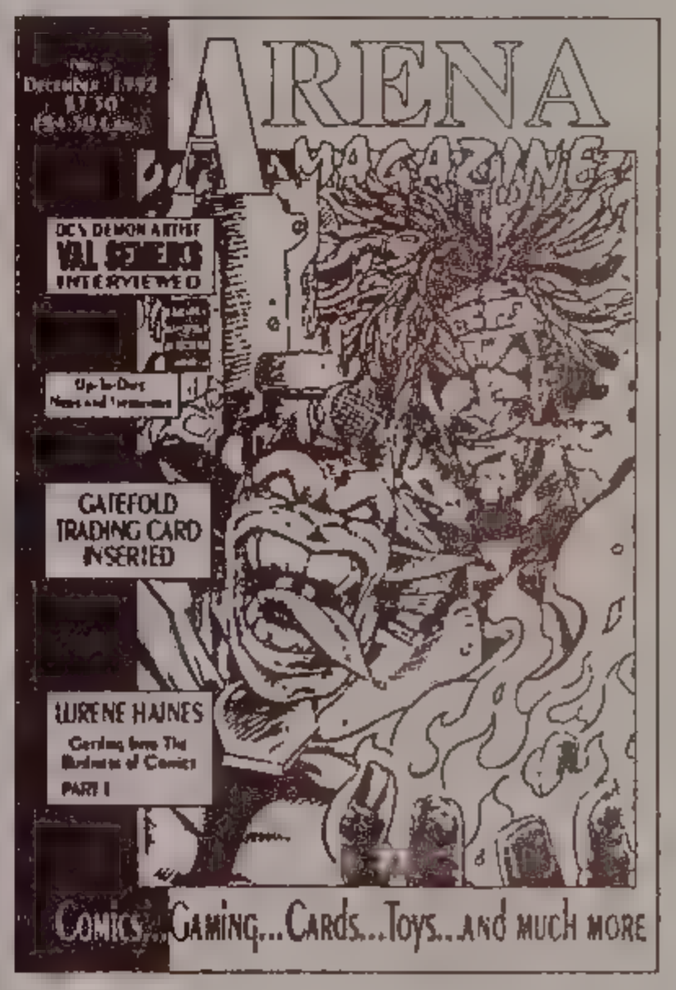

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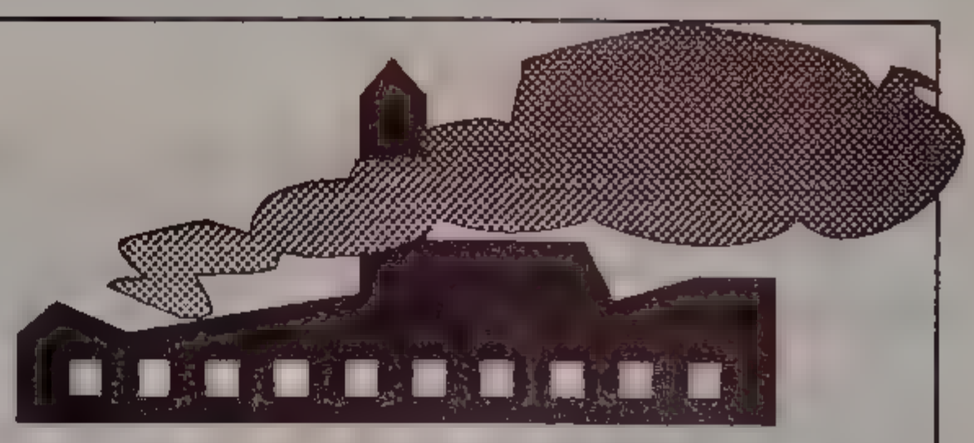
Industry News



Industry News

Maximortal Goes Low

Do you want to know why one of the biggest comic book publishers in America had to kill the world's greatest hero? Then you should read *The Maximortal*.

Scientists continue to study the strange and powerful being, and almost pay the price for their research. Over in Hollywood the True-man movie is breaking box office records after the mysterious death of the leading man.

Special Note – because Rick Veitch and Tundra Publishing want *The Maximortal* to be accessible to the entire Mature Readers consumer base, we are lowering the price, starting with issue #5, to $2.95. The covers will no longer have the embossed logo, but our customers feel that is a small price to pay to get their regular and affordable fix of *The Maximortal*. Retailers, please take this opportunity to order a few more copies and expand readership for this important and fantastic title.

Warp Supports Make-A-Wish Foundation

Warp Graphics announced today that several members of "Team Elfquest", including Wendy and Richard Pini, the co-creators of *Elfquest*, will appear at the Make-A-Wish ComicCon II to be held on March 21st at the Sheraton Inn in Liverpool, New York.

Last April, four comic book retailers in Syracuse, New York got together to organize the first comic convention to benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Through the combined efforts of Warp Graphics and other publishers who attended, convention goers, and these four retailers, enough money was raised to enable Make-A-Wish to grant a wish and a half. It is hoped that the 1993 event will raise the capital needed to bestow two full wishes.

Warp Graphics publisher Richard Pini said, "This is the second year we've participated in the Make-A-Wish convention, and we're more than happy to lend our support. This year, we're looking the bring at least half a dozen of the artists who freelance for us, to do sketches for convention attendees and help raise money for the wishes to be granted."

Blue Comet Press UK

Blue Comet Press has signed British writer/editor/reporter Paul H. Birch to package and create comics on a regular basis for USA and UK release! A secret project for sales to another larger U.S. publisher scripted by Birch is under way, and he has started work on his first BCP UK title, starring Zorann, Star-Warrior. British artist Joe Ahern will be pencilling and inks will be by Stormon. Dell Barras will be doing at least some of the series' covers. Paul H. Birch was editor of the failed *UK Fan Magazine* and is also writing for Malibu a series called *Mega-Deth*. Birch will be finding British artists and creators for use with Blue Comet Press UK.

Also, BCP and BCP UK will be getting more UK distribution through newly formed independent comics distributor, Black Tower, headed by Terry Hooper. Craig Stormon, President of Blue Comet Press stated, "Blue Comet has been actively working at UK and other outside U.S. distribution plans for years now. That is how I came to be friends and associates with Paul Birch and Terry Hooper. Both are very talented in their own right, and I am very excited to finally not only have BCP UK starting to package books, but also to have Black Tower helping to make the UK aware of BCP and other independent publishers!"

More detailed information on *Deathrow Vs. X-187* in Turf Wars and the new *Bladesmen Limited Edition* will be forth coming.

COMICS NOW

by Jerry Smith

One of the best superhero comics of the month has to be *Legionnaires*, a new title from DC Comics. I am not extremely familiar with the group's origins, but I believe they are supposed to be either clones or the past selves of DC's *Legion of Super-Heroes*. Not knowing who they are is one of the hooks of the book.

Although the teenage *Legionnaires* are offshoots of the older Legionnaires, writers Tom and Mary Bierbaum and dynamic penciller Chris Sprouse have imbued the book with its own agenda and personality. Indeed, the way the character's personalities are captured is the most fun part of the title. The Bierbaums have basically let each character's name and powers define the parameters of their personality.

For example, Shrinking Violet, a Legionnaire who can shrink down to sub-atomic size at will, is shy and unassertive. Inferno, who generates heat and light, is an arrogant jerk who is also a charming ladies man. Live Wire, who has lightning powers, is brash and undisciplined, but popular and well-liked among the other Legionnaires. Matter-Eater Lad, whose powers are just what the name implies, is one of my all time favorite comics characters. He realizes how ridiculous his power to eat anything is, as a result he is an amiable cut-up, someone the others look to for comedy relief.

There are plenty more Legionnaires. So many in fact, I'm not sure how the Bierbaums keep track of them, much less give all the characters screen time in any given issue. Somehow though, they manage to do it. At a glance, other Legionnaires include Apparition, Gossamer, Leviathan, Saturn Girl, Triad, Ultra Boy, Brainiac 5, Chameleon Boy, and others still.

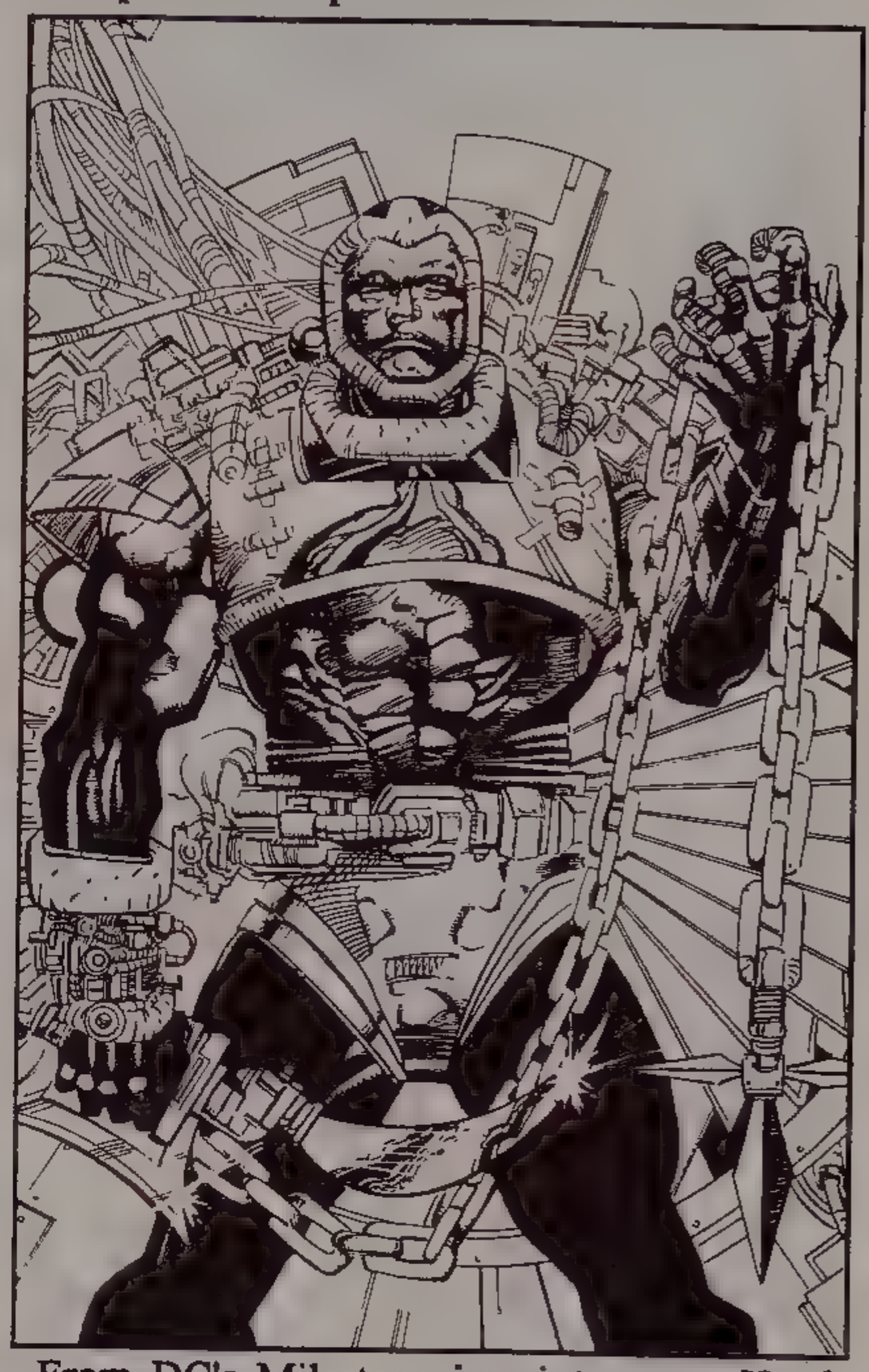
The key to this science fiction/adventure series is fun, fun, fun, til daddy takes their T-Bird away. Lovers of the classic *Legion* who are put off by the older, darker present Legion members will love these old-but-new likable kids. Teenagers and children new to Legion politics will love the interaction of heroes their own age. Adults who read superhero books will love it because this is why we read comics--for a fun story and a good time. Finally, a great comic that the whole family can enjoy.

Another superhero comic I'm surprised to be enjoying is *Supreme* from Image Comics. It seems every comic company has their version of *Superman*, Innovation has (or had) Victor, King Hell has the *Maximortal*, Milestone has *Icon*, and Image has *Supreme*.

Supreme is a super-powered character that left Earth years ago to go adventuring in space. When he returns in 1992, there are numerous supergroups that have sprung up to take his place, and he isn't sure he likes that. In *Supreme #2*, Supreme decides to take care of some unfinished business. A mass-murderer named Grizlock, killer of several of Supreme's friends before he left Earth, has been rotting in prison for forty-seven years. Supreme decided that's long enough and flies to the prison to kill him. When he gets there, he discovers that Grizlock is under the protection of the super-group Heavy Mettle, who, for some reason, is willing to fight to protect him.

Supreme is a unique take on the Superman persona. So far, he has no mandate to use his powers to help mankind or even be a nice guy. Indeed, until now he has really only used his abilities to break things and cause general destruction. He goes where he wants and does what he feels like when he gets there. At this point, Supreme seems to be out only for Supreme and no one else. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before this attitude will cause confrontations with other Image characters.

If, like me, you have been a bit put off by the directions of some of Image's books, try *Supreme*. It's a pleasant surprise.



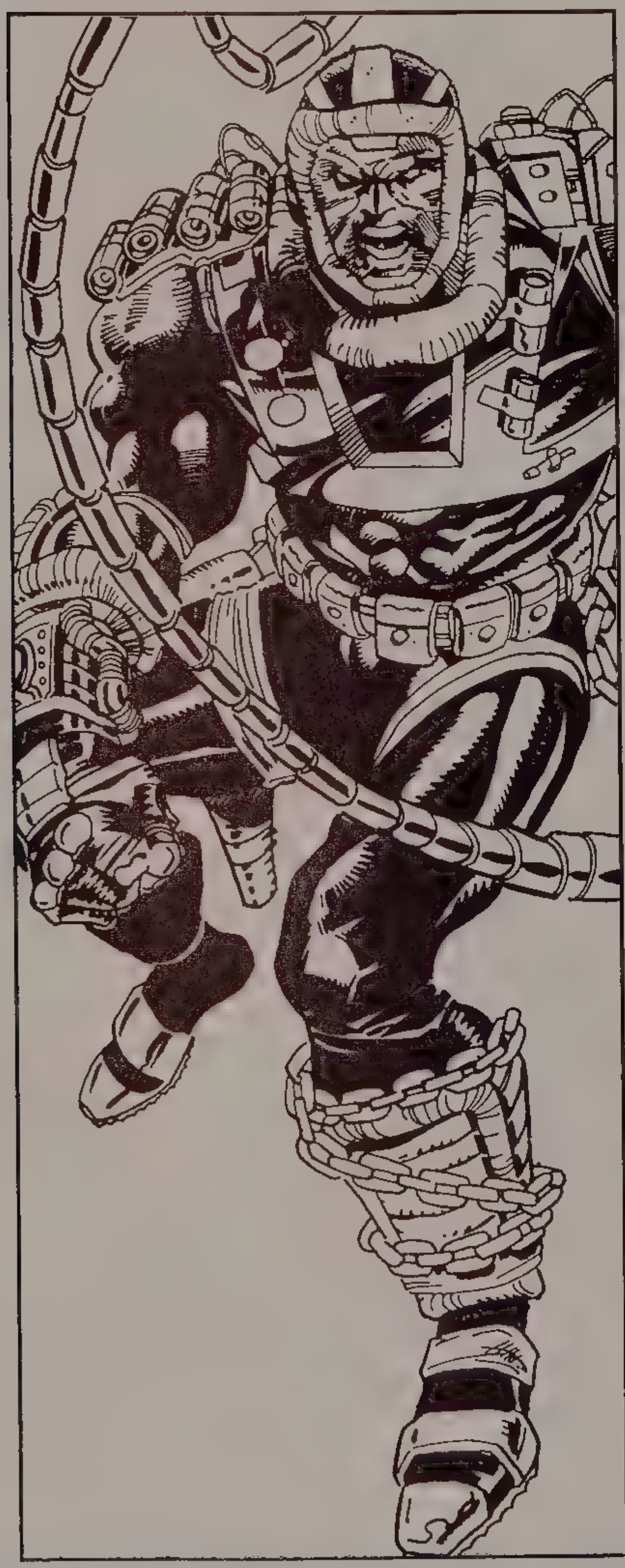
From DC's Milestone imprint comes *Hardware*, the story of Curtis Metcalf, an inventor who discovers that the inventor/tycoon he works for, his mentor since he was twelve years old, is as crooked as they come. Not only that, but the man Metcalf thought of as a surrogate father for years looks on him only as a commodity. Feeling betrayed and used, he builds himself a weapon-filled warsuit in order to track down said tycoon.

The first thing that struck me about this book (as well as all of the Milestone books) is the coloring. It looks dull and washed out. Compared to the slick paper most comics are using today, Milestone's coloring appears very rough.

Hardware is not a bad read, but there are several things about the character and story that did bother me. For one, Hardware is an ultra-violent character. This is from someone who loves Death Wish and Dirty Harry movies, so violence per se doesn't bother me. The problem is, when a character like Dirty Harry, or even the Punisher, kills someone, that person is portrayed very obviously as evil or bad or in the middle of commiting a heinous crime. Hardware kills and maims men

who are just doing their jobs, like security guards and helicopter pilots. In one instance, when Hardware attacks his boss's headquarters, he kills all of the helicopter crews sent to stop him, including pilots who told him clearly to surrender and he would not be harmed. Later, he kills a security guard standing outside the compound, and maims another by slicing his arm off at the elbow. There is no indication that any of these men were evil, knew that villain Edwin Alva was evil, or were doing anything other than their jobs. Am I wrong, or does slaughtering innocent people still qualify as murder in this country?

Curtis Metcalf, Hardware, is after a criminal,



Edwin Alva, for what seems to be mostly personal reasons (Alva told him he was not a "member of the family," but merely an employee on a payroll). Feeling slighted, he researches Alva and finds out he is a criminal. He dons a warsuit and proceeds to try and capture Alva, causing massive destruction along the way. And readers are supposed to relate to this guy?

While reading *Hardware*, I got the impression that Dwayne McDuffie, the writer of the book, is trying to portray Hardware as a hero. He's not a hero. He's a murderer.

I'd like to briefly address the recent trend of creating comics based on famous crimes and criminals. As long as these stories are based on true facts of public record, in my mind, there's nothing wrong with them. Is it wrong to make a movie depicting a crime? Is it wrong to write a book about a criminal's life? Some of these works may be written only to sensationalize a particular crime and make a quick buck, but as long as none of the money fills the criminal's pockets, I have a hard time finding anything inherently wrong with them. The problem lies with companies such as BoneYard Press and their *Young Jeffery Dahmer* comic, among others. It's one thing to tell the story of a real crime. It's quite another to fictionalize a criminal's actions for profit.

Along those lines, I'd like to recommend Eclipse Comics' *True Crime* #1. These True Crime comics, like the trading cards, purport to tell true stories about men and women on both sides of the law, real-life criminals and the law enforcement people who are assigned to stop them.

True Crime #1 has two stories, one about Mafia leader John Gotti becoming a "made man" (being inducted into the Mafia), and the other about Aileen "Lee" Wuornos, the first convicted female serial killer. Both stories are straightforward recountings of the facts, with real people and factual situations. There is no sensationalism and no extremely explicit violence. *True Crime* simply tells the story of who the person is and what they did. It's not titilating, but it is informational. *True Crime* does an excellent job of showing what motivates criminals to do what they do.

These comics and cards have come under fire from censorship and government groups in several states and other countries (most notably Canada). This is further proof that comics are still generally thought of as kiddie literature. While a book or movie (In Cold Blood, Bonnie & Clyde, The Yuppie Murders) goes without notice from the "authorities," a fact-based comic has to be ripped off the shelves before it harms countless numbers of impressionable children. Comics still have a long way to go on the road toward respectability.

FRANCHESCO!
93

A Conversation With ...Franchesco

Interview by Joe Martin

Franchesco is a newcomer to the industry, having secured his first professional assignment from DC Comics. And like all newcomers he's red hot! DC realizes this and offered him more than just a chance to pencil. They gave him free rein to co-create a brand spanking new Green Lantern. In this interview, Franchesco tells us about... Adam!

Joe Martin: *You created Adam for DC Comics?*

Franchesco: Basically, I co-created Adam. The writer, Elliot S! Maggin, was bright enough to come up with the concept and I really liked the story right off. There were a lot of interesting and original ideas that I played on. For example, there was not a request for Adam to look the way he does. He ended up looking different than what the script called for as far as bulk. It stressed that Adam should have five fingers and two opposable thumbs. That would make really big hands which I believe, in turn, should be attached to a really big guy. I'm very happy with the look of the character because I got the chance to do what I wanted to.

JM: *Who exactly is Adam?*

F: He's the only member of his cyclic race. His only companion on the moon-sized, barren planetoid that he lives on is his ring. He lives on this one lush, green spot, the only place where vegetation thrives on this hunk of rock, where he tends to his garden for the most part. But, anyway, his ring is the only "person" that he can talk to. He's the only male member of the Green Lantern Corps who, as far as I know, has a ring at birth. As far as other Green Lanterns, when they fall in combat, the ring flies away and goes to someone else. In Adam's case, the ring is there even before he is born. He inherits it.

JM: *Strange and interesting. Where will he be appearing?*

F: Adam will be appearing in the *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly#5* which ships in the spring of '93, I believe. He'll be featured on the cover. I'm anxious to see what the project will look like in print. Bob (*Miracleman*) Dvorak brought something incredible to the project. His inking on this book has really brought the artwork that next step up. He took whatever I indicated with my pencils and magnified it to where it looks so incredibly good. For the most part, inkers don't get the proper credit because people think that all they have to do is "trace the lines" but inking is so much more than that.

JM: *You've got to know how to draw.*

F: Yeah, you do. Bob's an incredible talent who I'm sure a lot of people will be hearing a lot about in times to come.

JM: *What's in the future for Adam?*

F: That's hard to answer because I don't want to ruin the story for people who will be picking up his debut into the DC Universe. What happens to Adam is very interesting and very self-explanatory. I can say that there

Adam this time
THE CRAFT'S INERTIA HAS GONE BEYOND THE MEANS OF ITS PROPULSION SYSTEM TO REGULATE.
& IF I DON'T STOP IT, IT'LL BURN UP IN THE ATMOSPHERE.
ELLIOT S! MAGGIN SCRIPT FRANCHESCO PENCILS

are certain elements to his character that are explored -- for example, his selflessness. It's one of those things that we, as people, tend to shy away from. Today seems like there is such a mentality to grab for what you can get and take care of number one and only number one. It's understandable but I think that the real life heroes are the ones who give of themselves even if danger is not part of the equasion. You hear incredible stories of firefighters. To me, these guys are true heroes. They put their life on the line everyday for total strangers and act as if it's just part of their job.

To be more specific, Adam is faced with a situation where he could do a responsible thing or look the other way and wouldn't be considered a bad person for it. He chooses to do the right thing even when he is told he shouldn't do it. That's one of the reasons he's so heroic rathewr than how many gallons of blood has splattered on the walls. Should he deliver food to the aliens whose transport was interrupted? He could have very easily sat back and said, "I can't do this because I have a really good reason to not jeopardize myself or my race," and so on and so forth. Adam was the only one who could deliver this cargo so he just simply did it. Once he applies himself in this way, rather than be rewarded for his efforts, he's attacked! That's what is important in this story. Just because you do expend yourself and help others and are not rewarded for your effort that doesn't mean that next time you're not going to do the same again. Just because you get your finger smashed in a car door, which hurts like hell, that doesn't mean you're never going to touch a car door again, you know?

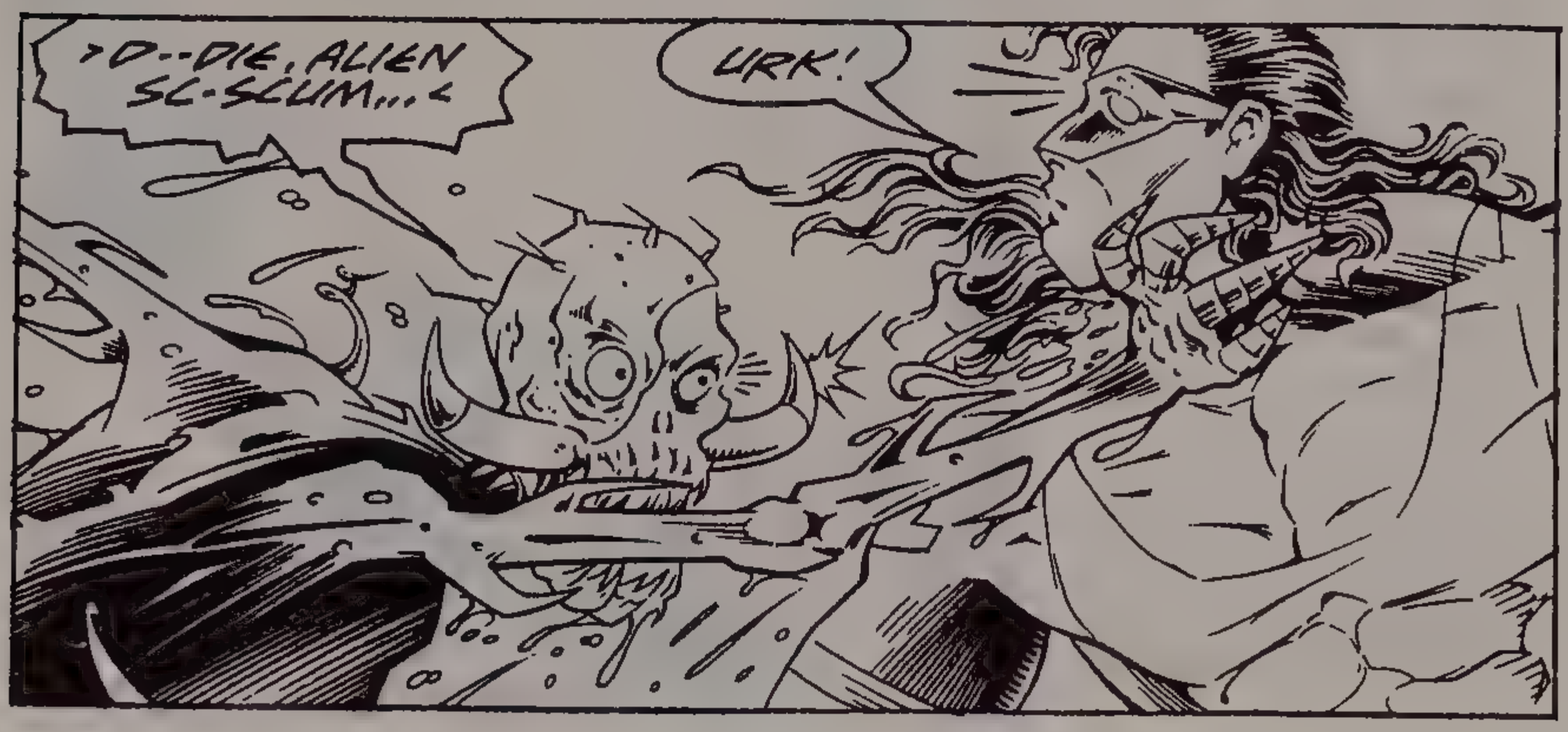
Anyway, that's a bit of characterization that's included in the story. Everybody on this project has been top-notch so I'm very fortunate. Kevin Dooley, who is the editor, was very accomodating and very patient with me for being so, pardon the pun, "green." He's one of those people who tends to say something and then does it. There's a lot of people in the industry who talk a "big game" but when it comes down to it they simply don't "put their money where their mouth is." Kevin does. I have a lot of respect for the Doolmeister for giving me this great opportunity.

JM: *I'm looking forward to the meeting between Adam and Guy Gardner—when and if they meet.*

F: I like the way you put that. When they do meet, and there's a possibility for that but, when you read the story, the question is, "Will they ever meet?" It's very cool the way this thing works out. I would love to see Adam's reaction and interaction with other characters in the DC Universe. Adam is very different. He's the only member of his race and it's a very lonely place to be. Because he is so isolated he doesn't have the skills you and I have developed since birth to deal with other people. He isn't really aware when someone is not being truthful and out to harm him. He doesn't have the luxury of developing these necessary social skills. The only thing he has is his ring, which advises him about what he should or should not do.

I would love to see Adam come to Earth to visit. That, to him, would be such an incredible experience meeting all these different varieties of people. He can't fathom the idea of all these people interacting with each other.

I would love to do more Adam in the future simply because I would have not stopped until I was very happy with the look of the character. And it pleased me that the editor accepted it because I wouldn't have stopped until he



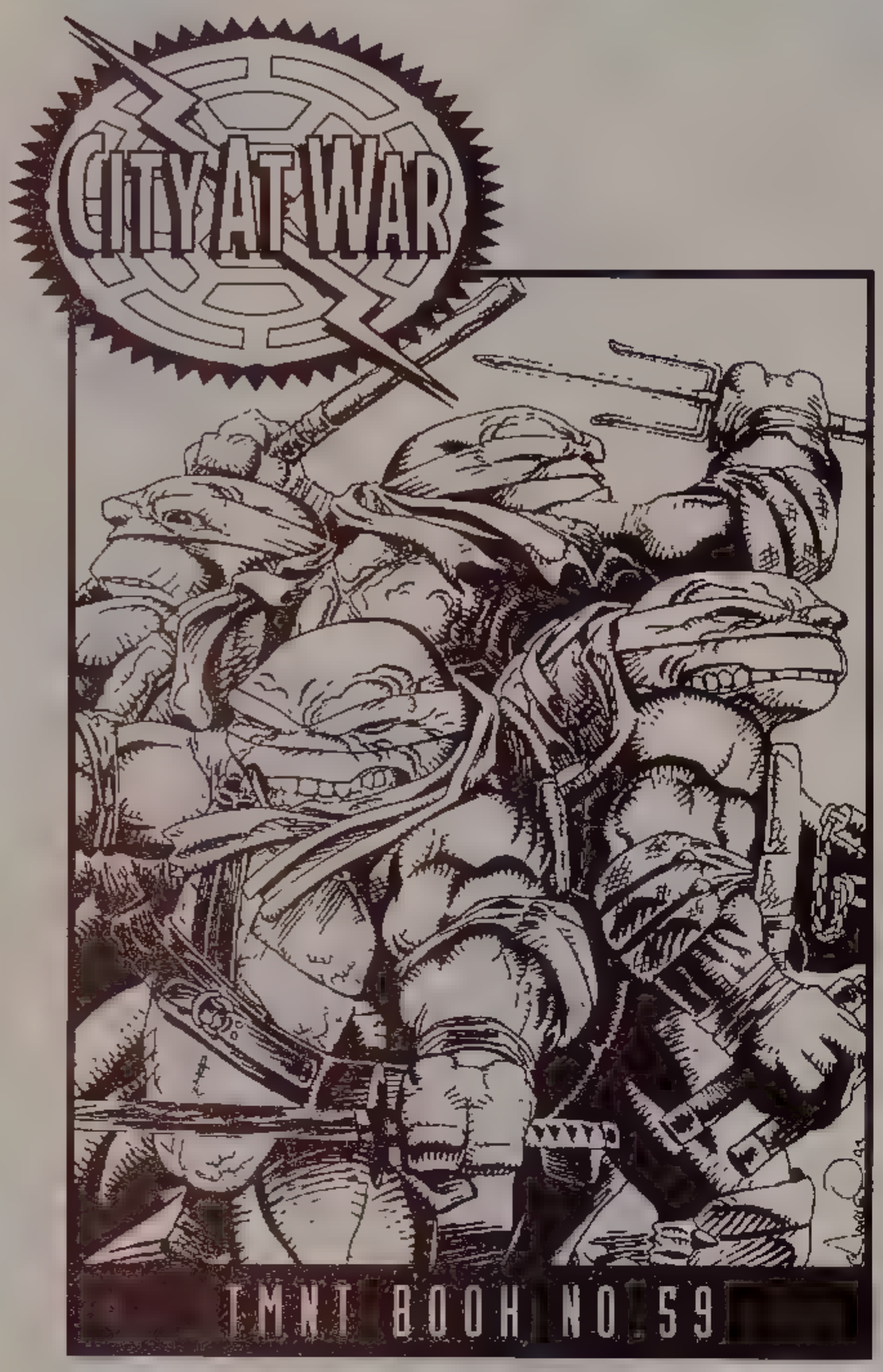
would have been pleased. It's gratifying to do something that you're proud of and I'm pleased with the reaction from the people who have seen Adam up to this point.

JM: That bodes well for the future.

F: Oh, yeah! Adam has a real bright future. I'm biased. I love this character so much. He's very close to me. I know he's not real and I know this is just a comic book character but this is not just kid's stuff for me. I love superheroes. I love comics. I always will. I hear people say, "I don't have time to read comics. I've been drawing them all day and a comic is the last thing I want to see," well, although I spend a lot of time at the drawing table, I still love comics as much as I used to. Some of the magic is gone because I know the in's and out's but, you know, that just makes me appreciate the ones that have been done well that much more. Magic does still happen in comic books. Everything that has happened in the Adam story is fantastic. I'm a big believer in karma and that if something good happens then something bad is bound to happen but, to my surprise, everything in this story is too good to be true. I was waiting for something bad to happen but it hasn't. It's been a dream project and I hope to some day work with these talented creators again and again.

May Releases

MIRAGE PUBLISHING

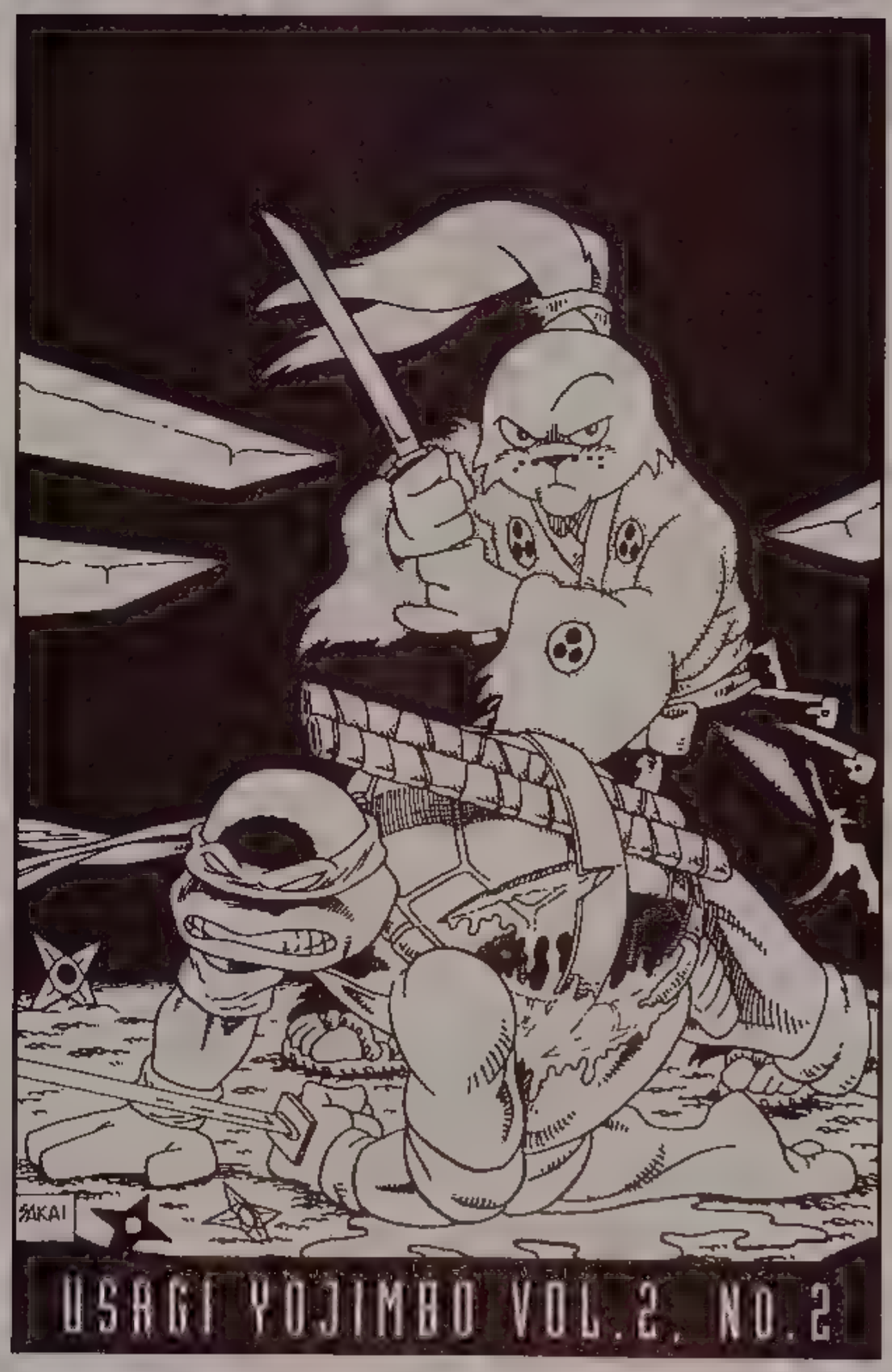


EASTMAN, LAIRD,
LAWSON & AIKEN
WITH COVER BY
A.C. FARLEY

"CITY AT WAR"
PART 10 OF 13

SHIPPING IN MAY!

USAGI™ YOJIMBO



STAN SAKAI • TOM LUTH

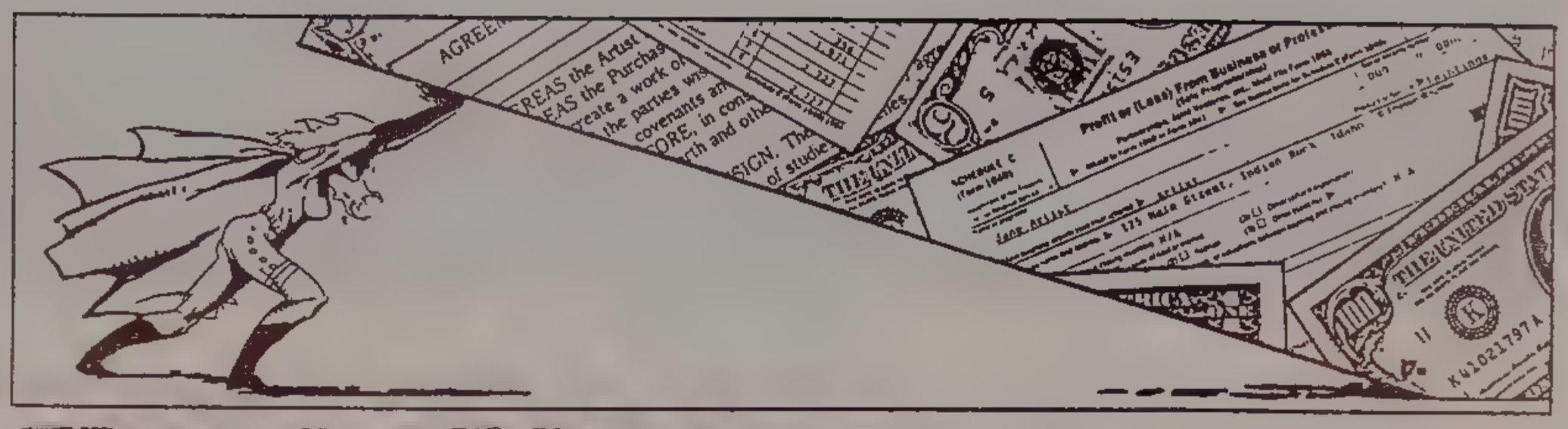
IN COLOR!

PREVIEW

PARADIGM

Created by Reginald LeDon Chaney, Brent Dorian Carpenter Brent Carpenter Sriter, Georges Jeanty Penciller and Aubrey Bradford Inker.

EEEEEE!
A LITTLE SOMETHING I LEARNED A LOOONG TIME AGO..
ALWAYS PUT IT IN THE BRAIN!
MY GOD!
HE'S DEAD!
I CHANGED RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!
MY MY HOW THE FLIES!
GRAB HIM!
WHADDAYA NUTS?!
I'M LATE FOR AN ASSASSINATION ON CLEAR ACROSS TOWN!
TWITCH AND YOU'D BE
PREDATOR! AND ON TIME FOR A CHANGE
I TAKE IT YOU RECEIVED MY STYLE NOTE
YOUR GAMES END HERE PSYCHOTIC BASTARD!



Getting Into The BUSINESS Of Comics

by Lurene Haines

Part 4: Approaching Potential Employers:
Step Two - The Mail Route

Last time we went over the basics of pursuing work through the convention circuit. This month we'll look at another aspect of getting your work samples to publishers; using the mail service.

Sending samples by mail and introducing yourself via letter, in combination with other methods of approaching possible employers, can provide a good base for breaking into comics. This gives editors and publishers a chance to peruse your work and mark your progress. If you are diligent about mail contact, it can even lead to professional comic jobs all on its own. But regardless of your approach, it's important to follow the correct procedures and etiquette for mailing samples.

Some Benefits of Taking the Mail Route

In the comic industry, a large percentage of the professionals live scattered across the country, and even overseas. For these people the mail system, together with courier services like Federal Express and United Parcel Service (UPS) and fax machines, provides an invaluable connection with their employers. Not only does the mail route provide a system for sending in completed work from wherever they may live, but initially it also provides them with an avenue for contacting potential employers, and following up on contacts made in person.

As I mentioned in the last column, conventions are a crucial component in securing work and gaining exposure as a newcomer. I also emphasized following up on those convention contacts by mail. This is one place where the mail system is indispensable.

The mail route also saves a hard working newcomer much of the time and money it would take to hoof it to a publisher's office, for the *slim possibility* of a personal interview. Most American publishers are located in a few major U.S. cities; New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Portland, etc., but as I mentioned earlier, most professionals are widely scattered. The same holds true for newcomers who ultimately must concern themselves with the costs and gambles of an unsolicited trip to see one of these publishers.

Should I Send Samples?

One of the first steps in making your presence known as an aspiring pro is to send samples of your work, with an introductory letter, to editors and publishers with whom you'd like to work. Many suggestions I made for assembling a portfolio (See Getting Into The Business Of Comics: Part Two, Arena Magazine #7) apply to sending samples by mail. We'll review these shortly. However, the question to keep in mind at all times is; "*Has my work reached a sufficiently professional level?*" If you feel that your work stands up to the quality of workmanship currently being handled by a publisher you wish to approach, then by all means, send your samples.

The best possible result would be that they see your stuff, love it, and contact you immediately for work. The worst case scenario is that they reject you soundly, and admonish you to consider another career. However it's most likely, if you follow the proper procedure and etiquette for mail-in samples, you will get a polite - and sometimes encouraging - acknowledgment that your samples were received, and will be 'put on file'.

Don't be discouraged. To get a

response of this nature should be considered great reassurance. This indicates there is some interest. If you follow through diligently and reliably (by all avenues, including the mail route) with a sound showing of hard work, that interest could ultimately blossom into a solid job offer.

If you've been able to attend a convention, and had a chance to meet some publishers and editors with whom you wish to work, now is the time to follow up on that good fortune. A week or two following the convention, you should be sending a note and more samples to those individuals you contacted. Use the mail route to keep your name and your work fresh in their minds. Most publishers and editors have an extensive and busy convention travel circuit. They have neither the time nor the inclination (unless you've shown the abilities of a new Leonardo Da Vinci!) to keep track of everyone, and follow through contacting them, the minute they return to their offices. By using the mail, you ensure that you are remembered, and even considered for upcoming projects.

What Mail System Should I Use?

As I've said, there are a number of mail systems available to you. Besides the Postal Service, you also have a variety of courier services at your disposal. Be forewarned; the correct procedures for sending unsolicited samples and introductory letters to a publisher uses the regular mail service. Although a courier service can often get your material there much quicker, it is considered inappropriate to use this method for submitting new work for consideration. In addition, you are looking at costs astronomically higher than is truly feasible, if you are seriously contacting several publishers regularly.

There are some things you should do to ensure that your system for sending out materials is streamlined and efficient.

1. Familiarize Yourself With the System

Take a trip to your local post office. Talk to a postal worker, and find out about the different types of mail classes available to you. Ask about approximate delivery times for your target cities, so you can better estimate the time to allow before following up on a submission.

Keep in mind, there are lots of little tricks and pieces of information you can use to make your mail submission system effective and efficient. Don't be afraid to ask questions of both the postal workers and any other business people you have contact with.

2. Stock Up on Mailing Supplies

While at the post office, invest in a few items. First, get a *postage rate schedule*. These are free for the asking, and provide a good reference in your home or studio/office. With a postage rate schedule you can figure out the correct postage for small packages you're sending out. It will also tell you the postage required for self-addressed, stamped envelopes (S.A.S.E) which should be included with all submissions.

It is also worth investing in an *inexpensive postage scale*. You can pick these up at any office supply store or through mail order catalogues. With the scale and the postal rate schedule, you will save yourself countless trips to the post office, and will make your regular submissions procedures much more efficient. This will ultimately leave you time to do what you enjoy most - honing your work skills.

With the thought in mind of conserving time wasted on multiple trips to the post office, you should also seriously consider investing $15.00 to $20.00 in *postage stamps* to keep on hand. The best way to calculate how much you should have convenient, is to make up a submission's package, and determine the postage required using your rate schedule and scale. As an example, let's say your standard package requires about $1.85 in postage, and you are enclosing standard size S.A.S.E. bearing $0.29 in postage. That puts your total at $2.14 per package. Let's say you'll want to send out packages to five different publishers, at a rate of once a month. In this case, it would be wise to keep a minimum of $10.70 in postage on hand, to save you those trips to the post office. Keeping in mind that you're likely to have other business-related postage requirements, it wouldn't hurt to pick up some extra stamps and round off your postage inventory at $15.00.

If you decide to purchase a stock of stamps, have the post office give you an

assortment of denominations that you can mix and match as required. They all spend the same, whether you use a single $1.00 stamp or three $0.29's, one $0.10 and three $0.01's. Keep your postage in a clean dry storage area (separate envelopes for each denomination is a good organizational practice) to ensure you don't spend an afternoon steaming apart gummed-together stamps. Unfortunately, I learned this the hard way my first year in sunny, *humid* Florida!

Besides postage materials, you should also invest in a package of *plain manila envelopes*. These can be acquired many places but shop around, since prices can vary greatly. Avoid the urge to use brightly colored or decorated envelopes (this includes your own art flourishes). It may seem like this would better catch the eye of a potential employer, but what it will really say is that you a) are spending too much time doing silly things instead of honing your skills and b) haven't yet learned correct professional business procedures. There's an old joke principle called KISS; Keep It Simple, Stupid. That's a very good philosophy to follow when handling any type of business, including mail submissions.

When you purchase your envelopes, remember to determine what size will best hold your submissions. If you plan to send 11" X 17" photocopies, make sure your envelope can hold them. Should you want them to stay flat, purchase a larger envelope. If you're not concerned about folding them in half, save some space and money, and buy a smaller envelope. Also, remember to buy some standard legal size envelopes - those are the long white ones your bills sometimes come in - to use for S.A.S.E.'s.

3. Organize Your Own Mail-Out System

Once you decide to begin sending out samples, you should have an organized method for proceeding. This will ensure two things; that you send regularly to publishers without accidentally doubling up or omitting one, and that you have a record of who got what, and when.

One way of tracking your mail submissions is to keep a log and file system. This means keeping a file folder on each publisher. In each folder, keep any notes you might have on that publisher (your contacts, their responses, etc.) and copies of whatever samples you sent.

Your log should be a notebook or another file folder. In it you should keep details about what you sent, to whom it was sent, and when it was sent. You should also note what the submission's package contained, the amount of postage you used, when or if you received a response, and any additional comments you might have about the entry. This type of log may seem excessively organized, but if you're frequently sending out multiple submissions, this allows you to track who gets what, when and how much it cost you. You will be able to balance your investment in the various companies against the responses you get from them. It will let you add or delete possible employers, and make changes in your actual contact person. It will also allow you to keep track of when to send updated samples and to whom you should direct them.

There are many other ways of tracking your mail submissions. If the log and file system doesn't work for you, then develop one that does. Just keep in mind, if you begin to practice good business skills at this early stage, not only will this help you down the road when you've established yourself professionally, but it will also serve to impress upon the publisher that you are a serious, competent and reliable business person. In combination with good creative skills, this may make the difference for you getting the job over someone who is as artistically skilled, but who may show less professional prowess.

What Should I Be Sending?

In Part 1 of this series, I outlined the procedure for getting the submission's guidelines for each company. In addition, I have started the Mail Room feature at the end of each column. This will provide the various publisher submissions guidelines. Each month I will feature a different company. Once you have established that information, and you've organized your mail out system, the next step is to decide what you should be sending. This is determined by a variety of factors, including: whom you are sending to, what type of work you're doing and whether this is a first-time, unsolicited contact.

First-Time versus Follow-Up Contact

First Time Submissions: If this is a 'cold' or

unsolicited submission, then the package you send should include samples of your work, as outlined by the company's submissions guidelines as well as an introductory cover letter (see boxed suggestions) and a business card. You should also make sure to include an S.A.S.E. for a response and/or return of your samples, if you want them back.

Your cover letter should be brief and to the point. Editors look at literally *hundreds* of submissions each week. If your cover letter looks like the first chapter of **War and Peace**, it's likely they will toss it aside and only quickly scan your submission, rather than taking the time to look it over carefully. Your cover letter should include very basic information about yourself and your experience. It should also reflect your sincere interest and commitment in addition to taking a professional tone. Keep in mind that the editor is taking valuable time from their work day to consider your samples. Be courteous and considerate, and thank them for their time. Do not make demands or issue ultimatums - that will only guarantee that your samples will quickly be filed under 'D' for Disposal! Try to think of this in terms of a job application. You are approaching a potential employer, and you must impress upon them that you are the best candidate for hiring. Not only for your work skills, but because you will be a valuable asset to that company as an employee.

A First-Time Submissions Cover Letter

- keep your letter brief, typed, and follow business letter format
- include your contact information; full name, address and phone number
- introduce yourself eg., "I am a 20 year old college student. . ."
- provide a brief description of related education and work experience
- describe your specific work interests and willingness to continually work at imrpoving your skills
- conclude with a courteous salutation
- be patient in awaiting a response

Follow-Up Contact: If you are following up on a previous meeting - for example, from a convention or store appearance - your sample package should reflect this. If your first contact was simply voiced interest then treat this as a first time submission, but mention your meeting with the editor in your cover letter (see boxed suggestions). On the other hand, if you had the opportunity to give the editor a business card, showed your portfolio, or left samples with that editor, then your first contact has been made, and now you should simply follow up as a courtesy. Send additional copies of any samples you may have presented in person, assuming that the editor may have misplaced them in their travels. This will ensure that you are not accidentally swept under the rug. If you have new, improved samples, then enclose a couple of pages with the copies, or in place of the samples you initially provided. Again, include another business card and an S.A.S.E., for the editor's convenience.

A Follow-Up Contact Cover Letter

- follow the same basic format as for the first-time submissions cover letter but include reference to your previous meeting eg., "I was delighted to meet you at the Heroe's Con two weeks ago, and appreciated the time you took to look at my work."
- include a brief explanation for this follow-up eg., "I just wanted to send you copies of my most recent samples for your consideration."
- keep the tone of your letter friendly, but business-like. Avoid taking an overly-familiar tone.

For follow-up contact, your cover letter can take a slightly more personal tone, but DO NOT assume that you have been burned into that editor's memory, or that you are suddenly their best buddy! They are still a potential employer you hope to work with. Treat them with that respect. It's always best to assume that you aren't remembered. Providing them with a reference point and reintroducing yourself is a professional courtesy. Keep in

mind, these people are meeting and doing business with thousands of individuals each year. If they only met you once, briefly, at a convention, it is most likely that you will have to jog their memory. They will appreciate the reminder, and you will impress them with your professional expertise. That will help to get you noticed.

Types of Samples You Should Send

Sample Format: You should carefully follow the submission's guidelines for each company. Try to restrict your samples to two or three pieces, and send only your best and most recent work. Each company follows different submission's guidelines, but they have many features in common.

In the case of art samples, without exception, publishers are interested in good, clean copies only - NOT originals! It is also a good idea to include copies that reflect the full size of the artwork, as well as copies reduced to printed comic page size. This serves two purposes; it allows the editor to see how your work would look when reduced for reproduction, and it makes it much easier to file. If your copies are 8 1/2" X 11," they will easily slip into a standard file folder, and therefore will be more accessible to an editor perusing his new talent file. If you send oversized 11" X 17" copies they must be stored in a flat file, or folded in half to fit a standard file.

It is also important to label, carefully and clearly, every page of your samples with your name and contact information. Writers should follow standard script format as provided by the company's submissions guidelines, or as outlined by a writer's manual. Comic script pages share much in common with screenplay format, and this should serve as a guide if you are unsure on how to proceed.

It doesn't hurt to date your sample pages, either. This will give the editor a reference point when they scan the new talent file. They will know at a glance how frequently you update your submissions, and will be able to track your degree of improvement. This is another indicator of your business professionalism.

Sample Contents: For the most part, editors want to see what you can do. This means, if you pencil and ink, you should send copies of BOTH. For example, some pros are stellar pencillers, but once they ink their work, it takes on an amateurish look. By providing copies of both, you allow the editor to assess ALL your skills. You may find yourself hired for a job just as the penciller or inker, because that's where your greatest ability lies. Don't sell yourself short by combining the two. Make sure that all aspects of your work skills are showcased.

Breaking into the comic industry as a writer can be fairly difficult. To increase your chances of being considered, it doesn't hurt to provide a variety of samples; an outline, sample script pages, and if possible, a page where an artist has illustrated the script. Many editors recommend writers find an artist to team up with. This provides both talents with the best way to showcase their skills - plus an editor is more likely to use a good established *team* who can work well together, than spend extra man-hours trying to track down a pencil-inker team for an unproven writer!

Whatever type of work you do, just make sure that you keep your samples to a few, high quality pages and strictly follow each company's submissions guidelines.

Who Should Receive Your Samples

Your samples are essentially your job application. Therefore, you should direct them to the companies with whom you wish to gain employment. If your interests lie exclusively with superhero subject matter, then you should restrict your mail-outs to the mainstream companies like D.C. Comics, Marvel Comics and Valiant. If your interests are a little more diverse or esoteric, then consider some smaller, independent publishers like Tundra, Dark Horse Comics, Caliber Press and Malibu Graphics.

Whatever material you are interested in, just remember to send samples to a variety of editors representing that company, and to continue sending samples regularly and consistently. Many editors pass around or share samples from newcomers, but as I said earlier, these are a very busy group of professionals, and they don't always have time to circulate the new samples that come in. Additionally, if they are out of the office for any period and become swamped with a work backlog, your samples may end up buried deep under a stack of other work. It may take months before your samples again see the light of day and by then they will

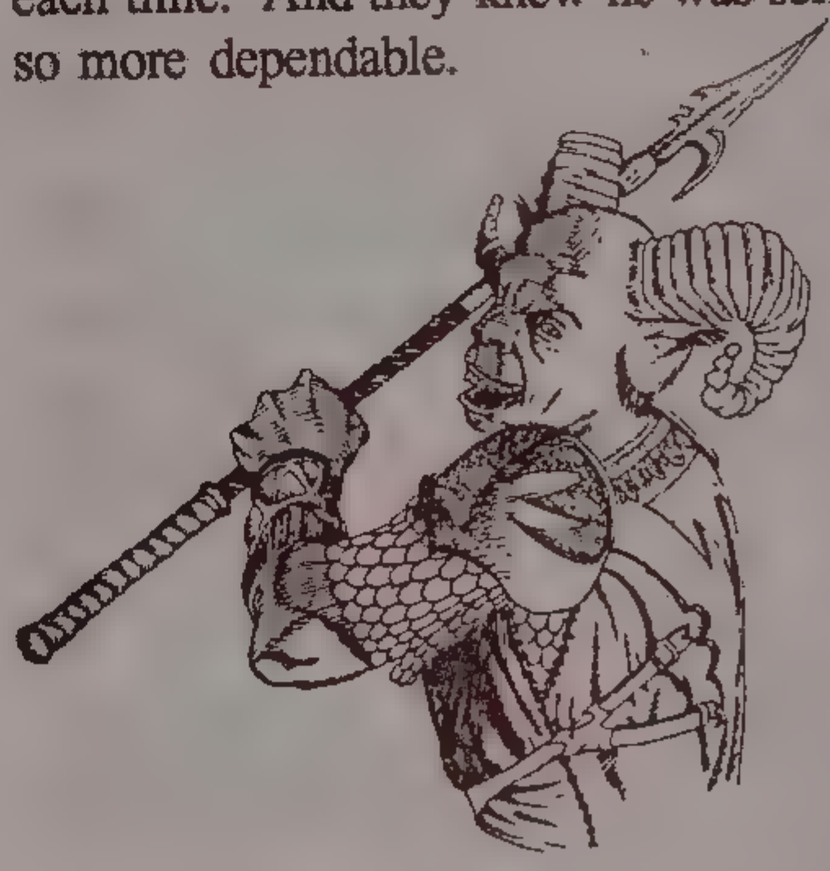
ProFiles

Professional: Les Dorscheid - Illustrator and colorist
Credits Include: *Nexus*, First Comics; *Batman:Red Rain*, *Deadman*, D.C. Comics, *Aliens:Hive*, Dark Horse Comics.
Current Projects: *Batman:Dark Joker*, D.C. Comics; *Nexus:Alien Justice #3*, Dark Horse Comics; "Discretion" art print, Moonlit Graphics.
Question: Has mail contact helped you make valuable work connections, and what specific mail methods would you recommend?

It isn't a guarantee, but sometimes the mail does help. In comics, you often get work by doing a job for somebody else. A new editor or art director has talked to that somebody else, then you'll get a call from them saying that your editor was real pleased with what you did, that *they* like what you did, and are you available? If they ask to see samples, then the mail system helps a lot. But it's not always as effective when you're sending it out cold, unsolicited. In comics, I've never gotten work through sending in unsolicited submissions. It's worked fine for my science fiction and fantasy illustrations, but not comics. It's always been one job from another, where someone saw something else I did. I got my start going on interviews, and I just happened to stumble onto the studio that was starting to produce *Nexus* (originally published by Capital and First Comics, now published by Dark Horse Comics). At that time, I wasn't pursuing the comic book market at all, so that was kind of fortunate.

Now that I'm established, and because I live in Wisconsin, the mail is pretty important to me. If it wasn't for Federal Express and overnight mail, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. At least not from Wisconsin!

I helped a friend, a student, send in mail submissions. What he did was send nice, clean, photocopies of his pencils and inks to a number of different editors. He directed them to specific editors, not just the company in general. He tried to target every editor he could think of in each company, because each one does keep their own records. They do pass samples around to other editors (within the company), but you're not guaranteed that will happen. When he sent submissions to D.C. Comics, I had him send off twelve or fifteen different sets, every six weeks or so. Each time his samples got a little bit better, because he kept practicing at his work. It took about a year, but I think that was mostly because he needed to improve. By the time he got to the quality level they wanted, he started to get the phone calls back. Now he's doing a number of professional jobs, not a monthly book yet but a number of jobs for Marvel. He's done three or four pin-ups and a couple of six page stories. As long as he keeps pursuing it, I think within the next two or three months he'll be full-time busy at it. It only took this long, because his work needed to develop to the point where it was good enough. Had he been at that level to start with, it would have come a lot quicker. By being so persistent, and sending samples over and over to the same editors, it let them see his stuff get better each time. And they knew he was serious, so more dependable.



A *rockorc* from Dorscheid's art print **"Discretion"** avaliable from Moonlit Graphics

be dated. But if you sent them to more than one editor, they will have made the rounds by this point, and this will significantly improve your chances of getting work.

Which Editor Should I Target?: When sending out sample packages, it's important to do your homework. As I suggested in Part 1 of this series, taking the time to keep a notebook record of publishers and editors is very important. This will provide you with the information you need to decide who should be the target of your sample packages.

Some companies have a single New Submissions Editor. This will be specified in their guidelines. In these cases, you should make sure that they receive a sample package, in addition to targeting any specific book editors. Send packages to any editors who work on books you are interested in, or whose work has been associated with books you've enjoyed or believe to be successful. Keep one important point in mind; don't expect to hear back from everyone you approach, S.A.S.E. or not. Many editors will be too busy, not interested, or might even be short on professional etiquette of their own. But don't give up. Keep sending out those samples.

When Should I Send My Samples?

Once you have selected the companies you wish to approach, and the specific editors you wish to target, then you should begin sending out your samples regularly. Decide, based on how frequently you produce new work, how often you want to send new samples. A good rule is to send new material every six to eight weeks. This shows both your sincere interest and dedication, and will allow the editors to track your improvement. Additionally, by sending sample packages at regular intervals, you make your name a recognizable quantity in the office.

"Here come Joe Pro's samples, just like clockwork!" Then, when a job comes up where they need someone new or quickly, Joe Pro's name is still on their mind, and he's got himself a job.

Keep a few important points in mind though:

1. *Don't make a pest of yourself.* If you're always sending the same stuff, and don't pay attention to any critical feedback from the editor, this will only serve to alienate them - a guarantee you *won't* get work. Try to keep a reasonable time span between submissions. If you send stuff in too frequently, you'll just annoy the editors.

2. *Don't be too familiar in your correspondence.* If you try to be too buddy-buddy, you may lose a shot a professional job. Also, try to avoid the 'gushing fan' letters. These do nothing to illustrate your professional skills, and only serve to irritate the editor since they run into that all the time at conventions!

3. *Be sure to reintroduce yourself each time you send samples.* Don't assume that you are so memorable that everyone will know who you are the instant they see your name - no matter how often you send in samples. Remember, these people are looking at hundreds of unsolicited submissions every week, besides all the material from established pros looking for more work. Remind them who you are, when you last sent samples, and what they were. This way, they'll have a reference point, and can quickly locate you in the submission's file.

4. *Don't be demanding.* Despite how often you've sent sample packs, or whether you've ever received a response, don't be surly, demanding or issue an ultimatum in your correspondence. If you feel that your work is going unacknowledged, consider sending your samples to a different editor. Your target editor may be too busy to deal with unsolicited material, or may be too unassertive to send you a rejection. Always keep the tone of your correspondence respectful and polite. Remember, they're doing *you* a favor by looking at your material, you're not doing *them* a favor by sending them your samples. If you're unsatisfied with their response, consider sending a simple, polite note with your next sample submission. State that you will be available for future work and then make it your last submission to that editor.

5. *Keep target editors informed of your employment status.* Just because editor A hires you before editor B, doesn't mean that you won't ever get work with editor B. Drop them a note with updated material - perhaps once or twice a year - and notify them of any professional jobs you do find, accompanied by a copy of the published material. This will show your 'hireability' *and* reliability as a freelancer.

Nothing encourages employers more than knowing someone else thinks your worth hiring! Also, just because you get one professional comic job, doesn't guarantee you're set, career-wise. A noteworthy characteristic of being a freelancer, is the need to constantly pursue new work, line up leads on new jobs and promote yourself. You'll have to work hard at staying regularly employed, so make sure you keep your contacts with various editors alive.

Making Use of Critical Feedback

One benefit of sending an S.A.S.E. with your sample submissions, is the likelihood of getting a professional critique of your work. Now, don't cringe! This sounds much worse than it is. Try to take a philosophical, learning outlook to reviewing criticism from your contacts.

If you are fortunate enough to receive more than just a form rejection letter, use the comments to guide you in improving your work skills. As with convention critiques, pay close attention to the comments. When you start to get similar comments from more than one source, then this is a good indication that you have a weak area that bears some improvement. If you get an isolated comment, which seems off-base to you, ignore it. Keep in mind that these are *individuals*, many who are not artists or writers themselves, offering you their personal opinion based on their own experience and industry knowledge. The key here is to keep in mind that it is their *opinion*, not necessarily the law. Also, remember that individuals have bad work days whatever the industry in which they work. If their comments seem particularly harsh and out of line, consider that they may be having some problems or difficulties in their own career or personal life. Whatever you do, DON'T TAKE CRITICISM PERSONALLY! It is not intended as a personal attack, but in general is offered as suggestions for improvement. They want you to be good, so they can have a new creator to work with. It does not benefit them in any way to mislead you intentionally by providing criticisms that are lies. But they *are* people, and they *can* make mistakes. Use your best judgment in determining the validity of the comments, and use that information to boost your skills, and ultimately your career. Acknowledge the value of their feedback when you next send samples, and point out areas where you've applied their advice to improve your skills. This will show your ability to listen and work cooperatively with an editor. When your work skills meet their approval, you will be quickly considered a valuable asset for your ability to work well with others on a creative team.

The S.A.S.E. Alternative

If you don't require that your submission samples be returned, conserve on postage by including a response card instead of an S.A.S.E.. The S.A.S.E. will require a

Publisher and Editor: _____(You print in this information prior to mailing)_____

Attention Editor;

This response card is provided for your convenience. If you could take the time to check the appropriate box or boxes, I would be very grateful. Thank you for your time.

☐ We have received your samples and placed them on file.

☐ We may consider you for future projects.

☐ We are interested in your work, and will be contacting you shortly.

☐ We regret we are not interested in your work at this time.

(***NOTE: Publisher information and your return mailing address should be on the front. Make sure you provide sufficient postage.)

Example Of A *Response Card*

minimum of $0.29 in postage, whereas a response card will cost only $0.19. That ten cent savings can add up as postage for additional submission's packages pretty quickly. A response card takes a little bit of work to design, but can be quite valuable. Simply, it is a postcard that lists preprinted responses an editor can check off, and a comment box. There are many benefits to this method, but most importantly it provides the editor with an inexpensive, quick and easy way to acknowledge receipt of your material. This is particularly useful if they are simply updating your file. If they wish to contact you for a job, they will follow through independently. In addition, if you note the publisher information on the card, when you address it, you can keep a detailed record of responders, and any comments they may take the time to note. The response card shows your commitment to the business aspects of working as a freelancer, and will not go unnoticed by the editor.

An Overview of The Mail Route

Using the various steps to contacting a potential employer through the mail, you are ready to move on as a freelancer. Remember to consider **the benefits of sending samples by mail**, and **which mail system** will best serve your purposes. Then you must **decide if your work is of sufficient quality** to merit consideration for employment. If you decide it is, the next step is to **familiarize yourself with the mail procedures, stock mail supplies** for making and sending sample packages, and **organize a system** for tracking the samples you send. Once this is done, your next step **is to get a copy of the submission's guidelines** for the companies you wish to approach, and **decide which editor or editors to target**.

Make sure you **use the correct submissions format** depending on whether your samples are being sent **unsolicited** or if you are making a **follow-up contact**. You should make sure you include an **introductory cover letter**, a **business card**, and **an S.A.S.E. or response card**. If you are following up on a personal contact, this should be reflected in your cover letter. **Send samples out consistently**, and with a demonstrable level of improvement each time. Keeping a regular **system of updating your samples** will allow the editors to mark the increase in your skill, as well as proving your professionalism.

Finally, **use feedback to improve your work**. Display your professionalism by applying any critical advice to your benefit, and expressing appreciation for the time taken to provide you with that feedback.

Next month we'll look at **Approaching Potential Employers - Part 3**. I will discuss the Personal Interview; getting ready, personal presentation and interview etiquette. Meanwhile, get your mail system organized, and put together sample packages, in preparation for sending out work and *Getting Into the Business of Comics*.

Glossary of Terms

cover letter - the single page correspondence sent with a sample package to an editor. The cover letter serves to introduce the freelancer to the editor, by providing information about education and past work experience, skills and outlines the type of work in which they are interested.

feedback - a critique of your work samples provided by an editor or professional. This advice can be invaluable in the continued improvement of your skills.

response card - a quick and easy alternative to the self-addressed, stamped envelope. Preprinted with stock responses an editor can check off, this card can help supplement your mail-out log information. Can help save on postage costs if formatted as a postcard.

S.A.S.E. - a self-addressed, stamped envelope (usually a #14 - legal size), provided with a sample submission to facilitate a response and/or return of samples, by the editor.

submission's guidelines - written rules provided by publishers to act as a guide for new talent submissions of artwork or writing. These guidelines stipulate the form and method that unsolicited submissions should take when sent to that publisher. Aspiring pros should strictly follow these guidelines for serious consideration of their work.

unsolicited submission - a submission of work samples sent without invitation to a publisher.

The Mailroom: Submissions Guidelines

Welcome to the second installment of The Mailroom. Each month we will print the submissions guidelines for an individual publisher. There is in no particular order. These are current guidelines, provided by the publisher or submissions editor. Use these as a strict guide when sending samples of work to the company.

This time around we are featuring Tundra Publishing. Tundra was established by Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles creator Kevin Eastwood to address the interests of creators with material somewhat out of the mainstream. Their Submissions Guidelines are quite simple.

Tundra Publishing Submissions Guidelines

Dear Creator,

This briefly defines our needs for comics and illustrated material, and our preferences for submission format. Please follow these general suggestions as closely as possible before sending material to Tundra.

NOTES ON TUNDRA

Tundra Publishing Ltd. has been organized around the principle of creators' rights - in short that creators have complete right to their intellectual property and final approval of the presentation, promotion and development of their work. Thus, Tundra has few if any open-ended series, and no "house" titles for which we seek artists and writers to "fill in". Rather Tundra publishes, and seeks submissions for, fully conceptualized projects, preferably from a single writer/artist or writer/artist team. While we welcome artists' portfolios and samples, and writers' scripts and proposals, we rarely provide the service of matching scripts to artists. While we keep an active file of artists hoping to work with us, and while we are seeking artists for some special written proposals in hand, it is the exception rather than the rule for us to find work for creators. If you are an artist, or a writer looking for characters or titles to script, we suggest (without endorsement) you try any of the several publishing houses with pre-existing vehicles.

NATURE OF MATERIAL

Not surprisingly then, Tundra seeks only original, fresh, well-conceived and well-developed concepts, primarily from single writer/artists or from writer/artist teams who have clear visions of what accomplishments in expressing themselves in the sequential art form. This by no means suggests that Tundra has no room or willingness to publish "unknowns" or first-time comic creators; we simply ask that you consider, and hone, your concept and skills carefully before approaching Tundra, which specializes in high quality production of accomplished work, regardless of genre, subject, or format.

FORMAT

Our preferred format for submissions comprises a plot synopsis of adequate detail, suggested publication format (e.g. as 48-page squarebound comicbooks), character descriptions, character studies, a representative scene fully scripted, and a representative scene in at least pencilled form (painters and color artists should provide color samples). Never send original art or writing - black-and-white or color photocopies are generally sufficient. Slides, photos, and C-prints are also acceptable, but include postage if you require return.

While we accept less elaborate proposals, this format does represent our preferences as it allows us a relatively full understanding of the concept and how it will unfold, clear documentation of printable scripts and artwork, and samplings of the writer/artist's or writer/artist team's approach and ability.

If you wish your material returned, you must provide sufficient return postage. In the instance of rejection, we notify creators and hold material without postage for 10 days pending receipt of postage or disposal. While we make every effort at considerate care, we assume no ultimate responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts.

If you have questions about the topics covered in this column, please feel free to write. I will try to address your questions in the column or by a personal note. Send your letters to **Lurene Haines, c/o Comics Arena Magazine, 264 Main St., Florence, KY 41042**

Comic Chat!

A Conversation With ...Daerick Gross

Interview by Joe Martin

Daerick Gross is painting the town red. He's creating his own line of comics under Heroic Publishing imbuing it with the Daerick Gross Imprint for Adult Readers audience, is also painting a project for DC Comics and has plied his trade with Innovation, Malibu. and has a series of cover painting coming out with Sky Comics. With that much said, let's find out about this enterprising individual's plans for the future.

Joe Martin: *Tell us about your current projects.*

Daerick Gross: [Laughter] Even though that was asked, I don't have an answer. Seriously, my ongoing projects include *Necroscope* for Malibu and I'm attempting to stay on schedule with the Batman project for DC.

JM: *The Batman/ Two-Face book?*

DG: Yes. That's scheduled for spring and my half will be fully painted.

JM: *It's divided into two parts?*

DG: Well, it's Two-Face. What do you expect? It's a two-part story and each part is two-parts. An old story that supposedly took place years ago and a resurrection of the incident that takes place again now. I'll be doing the now part. Joe (*New Guardians*) Staton is doing the old part and DC is going out of their way to make it look like the Batman art of the '50s. It's a flip book. I do the covers for my side and Dick (*Detective Comics*) Sprang is doing the covers for the Joe Staton side. We're both doing the same cover concept. DC sent out a sketch of what they kind of want the covers to look like. I've seen one of Sprang's covers and I have it to compare against what I did and it's strange to see how two different artists will handle the same set-up. There's a radical difference.

JM: *That should be interesting.*

DG: Yeah, I'm real enthused about it. Batman is such an intimidating character to jump into kind of unknown. It's like going straight to the biggest gun DC has. Thus, my first issue, I believe, is a little too tight, a little too conventional. I'm thinking, "This is Batman. I've got to be exactly perfect." But in the second issue I loosened up and decided, "Aw, this is Batman... so what!" [Laughs] I think the art is more energetic without looking radically different and I feel a bit better about it. It's a good shift.

JM: *Cool. And then you've got the Daerick Gross Imprint?*

DG: Ah, yes -- the Daerick Gross Imprint. I had a couple of characters out several years ago and Dennis Mallonee at Heroic saw some potential in it. We decided to resurrect it and at first we were just going to re-print but then we decided not to and that it would be better to revamp everything and start from scratch. In a continuity sense, everything that happened before *may* have happened. Some of it will be retold with some of the revisions we've made with the characters.

We started off with Murcielaga the She-Bat. I'm trying to use everything's full title in print simply because I want to clearly make her distinctive from Valeria the She-Bat which will be put out by Continuity. After both characters are visually established, we can shortcut to just She-Bat and everybody will know who's who.

JM: *Right. You've got to be careful because that's a very gray area.*

DG: Absolutely. We started with Murcielaga so we could re-acquaint her with the readers and I'd like to say that *Murcielaga #2* was put together rather quickly. My time constraints became very limited and I wasn't able to be as involved as I wanted to be with that issue. It wasn't quite what I wanted it to be. People who are familiar with me know me as an artist and they would expect the art to have a certain quality about it. With no detriment intended towards Jim Hall, who did the art, it wasn't what I wanted. The look wasn't quite right and I think that people thought that I should have found an artist with a different "feel."

During the time that #2 was being done, I did find John Statema who is taking over with #3. I am blown away with his art. It is gorgeous. I think it's the best black and white work I've seen since Bernie Wrightson. Not to say that their styles are similar but Statema has a penmanship that is reminiscient of Wrightson's.

JM: ***Murcielaga #3 ships in*** *May?*

DG: Right. That one is essentially my kick-off issue.

Starting in June will be the *Reiki Warriors* with an art team of John Stanisci and Rob Lansley. They're both fairly new to the field. Tha art will at first be a little raw but a good foundation. John's pencils have strong moments of great brilliance particularly when he's allowed some dramatic moments. The drama level is excel-

lent. The writer on *Reiki* is Eric Dinehart who has a real wonderful sense for the bizarre except for issue #2 which is written by Spike Steffanhagen and is a very topical issue.

By the way, the writer on *Murcielaga the She-Bat* will be Martin (*Sherlocke Holmes, Necroscope*) Powell. He's turning in some wonderful scripts and he comes on with #3, also.

JM: *That's basically a new #1 for you.*

DG: Exactly. I wish there was a way to actually market it like that. It's sort of her fifth anniversary issue from her first appearance in comics. I want people to know that Murcielaga has been around for about five years. Not always in public but she has existed that long.

Moving on, July kicks off a six-issue miniseries with a character named *Blackwatch*. Again, Martin Powell is doing the writing and I'll be doing the art on it. It's a real impactive story about a superhero that's been around for a long time and he's well-established who contracts H.I.V. from one of his myriad of girlfriends. He hasn't led a particularly saintly bachelor life. Through the course of events he inadvertently infects a villain whose super-metabolism accelerates the disease sufficiently. So, we do carry one character through the whole event of contracting full-blown AIDS and finally succumbing to it. Blackwatch himself will not get it, he will just maintain the H.I.V. status and must adjust his life to it. The series will depict what a person may go through emotionally and personally and how their friends, relations, family and, in this case, the city of Atlanta will react since Blackwatch has been their number one hero. And ultimately, the impact that is felt across the world and the current super hero society.

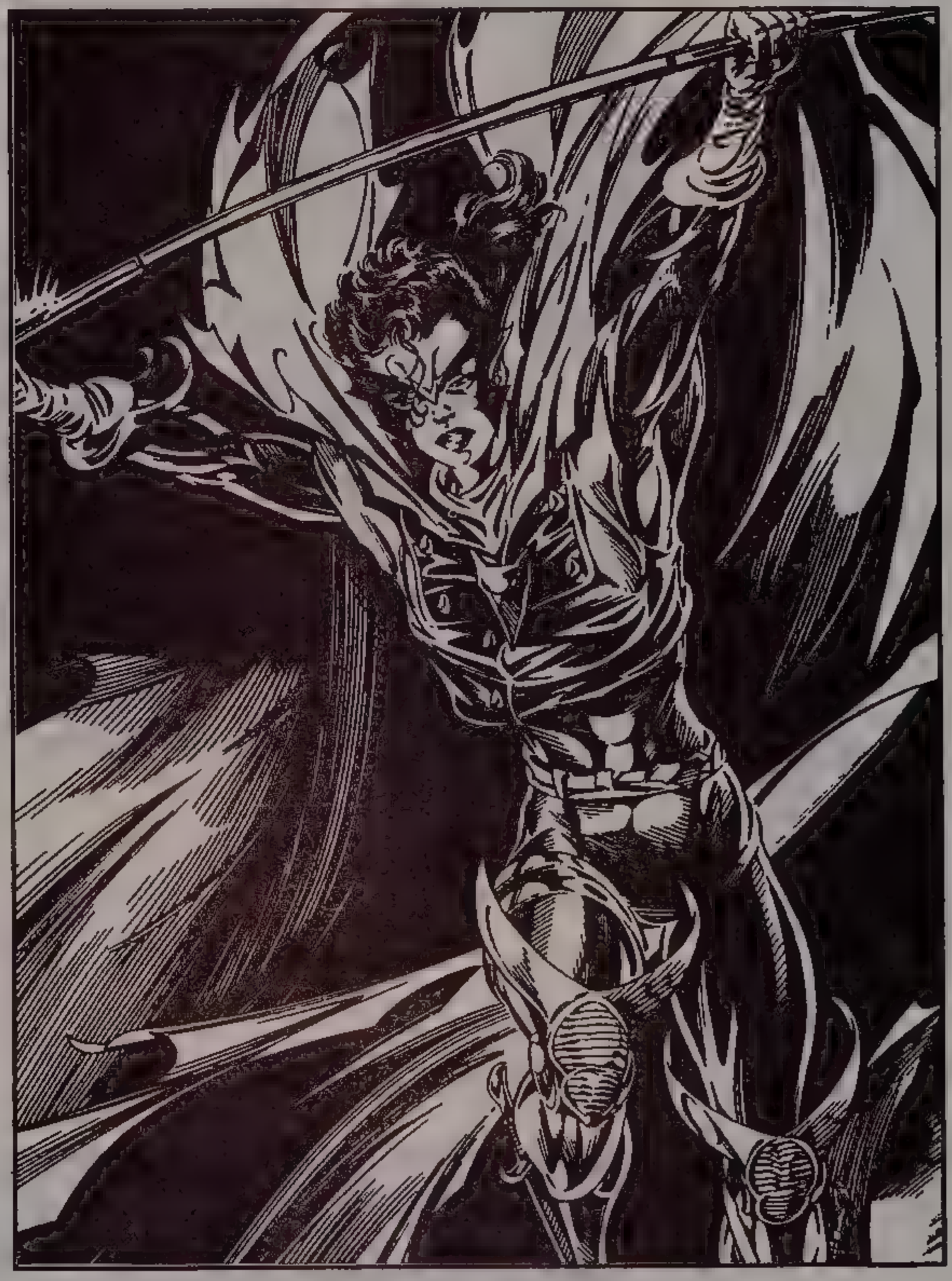
August releases the *MYTHfits*. It caters to the heavy metal, hard core, almost underground, rock & roll crowd. It's about five creatures of Greek mythology - the gorgon, the minotaur, the centaur, the mermaid and the satyr - who are resurrected in modern New York. They get all punked out in leather, chains and tattoos and they take on the supernatural problems of the world.

Later, with no certain release date as of yet, a six-issue miniseries called the *Jinni* will debut. It's an actual, classical "Arabian Nights" jinni that is released into today's world and runs amuck. He's gone over the edge from his long imprisonment and through the course of events he affects hundreds of people's lives in good and bad ways without much care because he is unbalanced. This brings into play other jinn around the world as well as Satan, all kinds of demons from hell, and the personification of Death. This is definite grand scale stuff. This one is written by a surprisingly brilliant fellow by the name of Bryan Hilbert. He's really impressing me with the scripts he's turned in.

JM: *Do the titles cross over with each other?*

DG: Later on, yes. First, we're going to concentrate on establishing everything. There will be integrated imagery in the titles that carry throughout all the issues.

...Continued in *Arena #10*!



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WOLVERINE © MARVEL COMICS 93

Brit Bits

News and gossip from across the ocean by Paul H.Birch

"It's taken us two years to get to the stage where we thought, okay we're ready to go!" commented Steven Donavon editor of *Mindbender*, a hefty tome which should be on American soil around now. "The idea was to develop a European type magazine but it just grew!" $12.95 is the asking price but you get a 112 page book for your money and eight stories to boot, the shortest being 12 pages, the longest 31. Optimistically the book will run to 12 issues, and as Donavon explains, "There are five mini-series and three one-offs for #1, which is how we want it to develop.

"We've been able to gather the best of British talent, and we've also got new talent like Colin Stansford, who's very Simon Bisley influenced." The established talent includes Hilary Robinson and Nigel Dobbyns (*2000AD* regulars), Ron Tiner (*Hellblazer*), David Pugh (*Slaine, Dan Dare*) and a personal favorite stemming back to my own childhood, Eric Bradbury.

Bradbury a veteran, now in his 70s has worked on countless British comic strips that would mean little to US readers, but they may come across his work in the Titan book *Time Twisters* paired with Alan Moore. After working anonymously for decades, Bradbury refuses to be dragged out under the comics limelight for interviews or personal appearances, but friends reliably tell me he's a lively, amusing man, still interested in producing comic material for people to enjoy. *Mindbenders #1* will feature Bradbury's art on 'Leaping Jack', and he is working on ' Freddu's Last Stand', an adaptation of a play based on Liverpool night-life.

Bob Wakelin, who's appeared in publications such as *Epic Illustrated* turns in 'Pixel', the adventures of a black heroine, described as "Absolutely amazing!" 'Pixel' is the 12 page strip and will be in color.

Diamond are said to be enthusiastic about *Mindbenders*' potential in the US market, and W.H. Smith's distribution network over here in the UK, are believed to have ordered higher than they did with *Wignal To Noise* by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean. Reaction from British comic book retailers & distributors is unknown at the time of writing.

Mindbenders is set for a quarterly release, with work from Warren Ellis (*Lazarus Churchyard*), and John Ridgway (*Hellblazer, My Name is Chaos*) scheduled to appear in #2.

Picturebox, publishers of the *Over The Edge* anthology hope to bring the title out on a bimonthly schedule at last, but there's no word on the Steve Pugh / Paul Duncan one-shot, Frontier.

The *Mutatis* team of Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning & John Higgins stay together for a *Vision and The Scarlet Witch* series. Word has it that when the right to World Without End are returned to Higgins & Jamie Delano from DC, they may do a follow-up series.

Similarly talented Scottish artist Colin McNeil (*Legends of the Dark Knight #37, Judge Dredd: America*) is working on a Tales of Suspense mini-series. Those with long memories and receding hair-lines will recall the title featuring Captain America and Iron Man in individual adventures during its original run back in the 60's, however they'll be teaming up for this one. if you catch a well-built moustached walk-on character, it's Colin doing another

cameo self-portrait! The artist may also be doing artwork for *Conan*.

Pat Mills and John Erasmus continue to work together after *Sex Warriors* for Dark Horse by collaborating on *Terraists* a new superhero group for Marvel - seeing this is penned by the creator of *Marshal Law* don't go expecting too many niceties, and by the spelling of the title take a bet out on it having ecological concerns.

American artist, Del Barras (*Motormouth & Killpower*) will illustrate *Death Metal* for Marvel UK from Simon Furman's scripts, while John Royle tells me *Pendragon #13* and *#14* will feature that lovely chap, Death's Head.

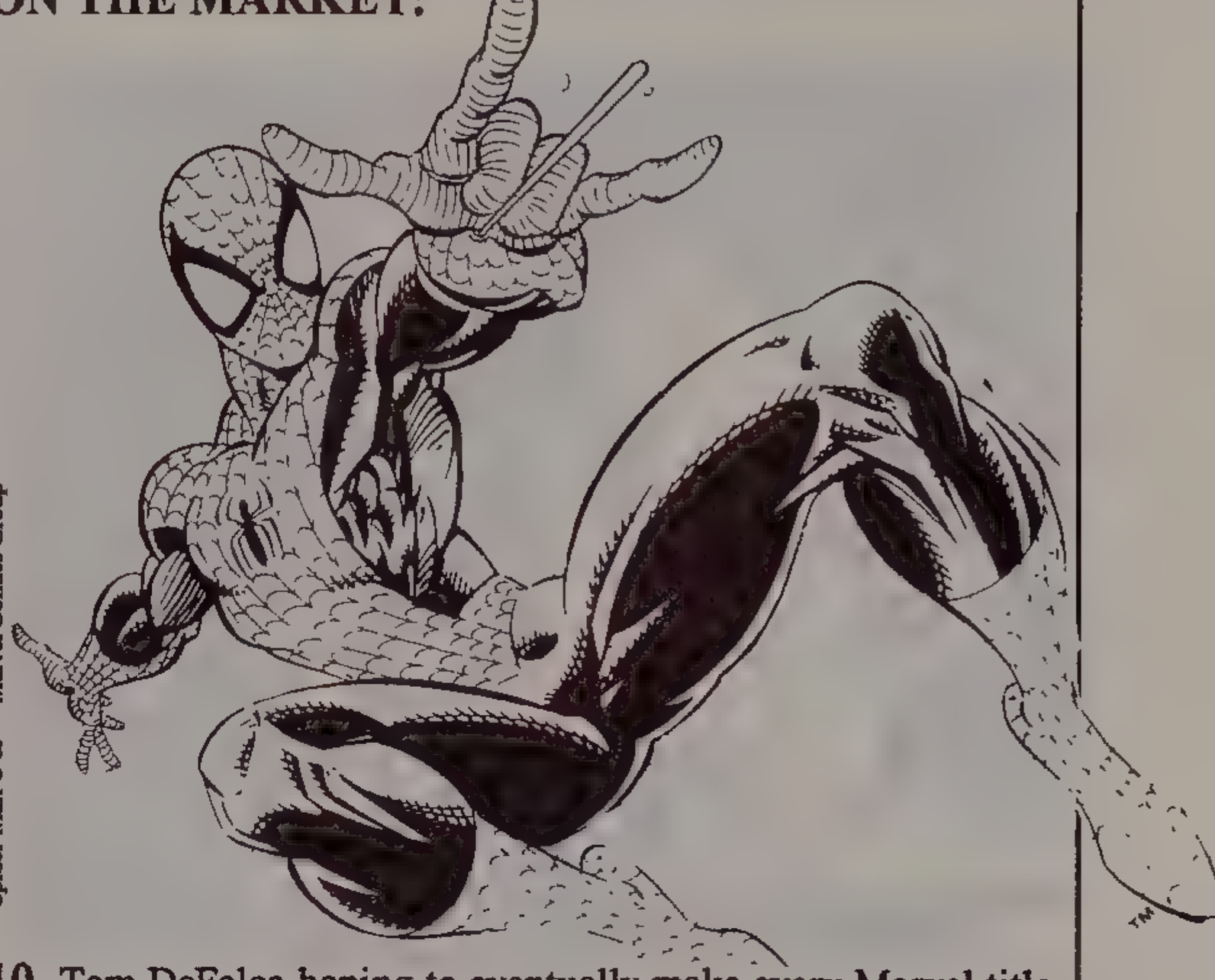
Mark Buckingham has now decided to relinquish all his inking assignments for '93 to concentrate on pencil work.

Shane Oakly who should be familiar to those who cottoned on to his work in *Mr. X* and *Killing Stroke* says 'Fatal Charm', a series he collaborated on with D' Israeli for Deadline should be putting in one more appearance, with a script by Andrew Elliott. Oakly has also done the art for a ten page Doug Wheeler script that'll appear in *Taboo #8*. With *Taboo* due to conclude with *#10*, Steve Bissette obviously couldn't take on board Jamie Delano & Oakly's 'The Crack' strip (still to be completed artwise!). Ironically their previous collaboration for *A.A.R.G.H!* was recently reprinted in Sweden. The artist's working on projects with several other writers, including B*lack Orchid's* Dick Forman.

Someone told me Black Sabbath's very own Geezer Butler may be doing the official Malibu Comic of the group, whilst another writer from that bass player's home city was given the go-ahead to script the Megadeth comic. Guess who!

TOP 10 REASONS

MARVEL IS RELEASING MORE AND MORE NEW *SPIDER-MAN* TITLES, LIKE "*SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED*", EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE OVER FIVE SPIDER-MAN TITLES ALREADY ON THE MARKET:



Spider-Man © & ™ Marvel Comics Group

10. Tom DeFalco hoping to eventually make every Marvel title an *Amazing Spider-Man* spinoff.

9. Marvel trying to end recession singlehandedly by giving work to all unemployed comic writers and artists in the United States.

8. Trying to woo Rob Liefeld back to company by giving him own *Spider-Man* title.

7. Eventually every state in union, plus Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and all Florida Keys will have personalized *Spider-Man* title.

6. Keep coming up with cool names for *Spider-Man* titles.

5. Hoping to woo John Byrne back to company by offering him own *Spider-Man* title.

4. Hopes lots of quality *Spider-Man* books ensure upcoming Spider-Man movie doesn't turn out like the Punisher movie. Or the Captain America movie. Or the Dr. Strange movie. Or the Daredevil/Thor appearances on Hulk TV movies. Or Spider-Man and Amazing Friends Saturday morning car toon ...

3. Trying to outdo DC Comics 1950s record of eight hundred *Superman* titles.

2. Hoping to woo Todd McFarlane back to company by offering him own *Spider-Man* title.

1. Jim Shooter, disguising voice as Tom DeFalco, keeps calling Executive Editor Mark Gruenwald and ordering more *Spider-Man* titles.

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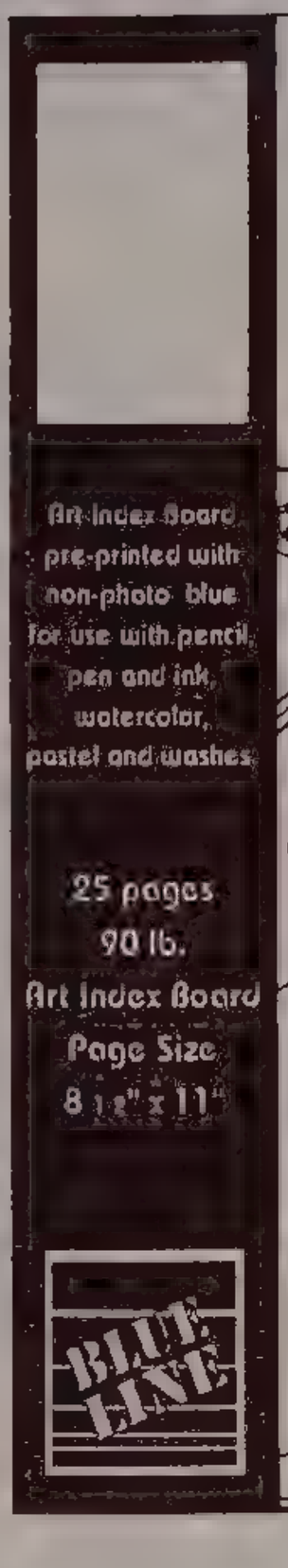
A convenient, quality way to organize your sketches and can also be used as a combination note pad and art pad! Both sides are printed in non-photo blue so the artist can proceed to ink his drawings on quality 90 lb. index board. Concept Pages are 25 8½" x 11" pages per pad.


Art Index Board pre-printed with non-photo blue for use with pencil, pen and ink, watercolor, pastel and washes
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Great for Gamers!

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Prices include shipping inside of the United States. Additional postage will be necessary for shipments outside of the United States.

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COMIC BOOK PAGES	$10.00	$9.00	$8.00	$7.00
CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES	$6.95	$5.95	$5.25	$4.75

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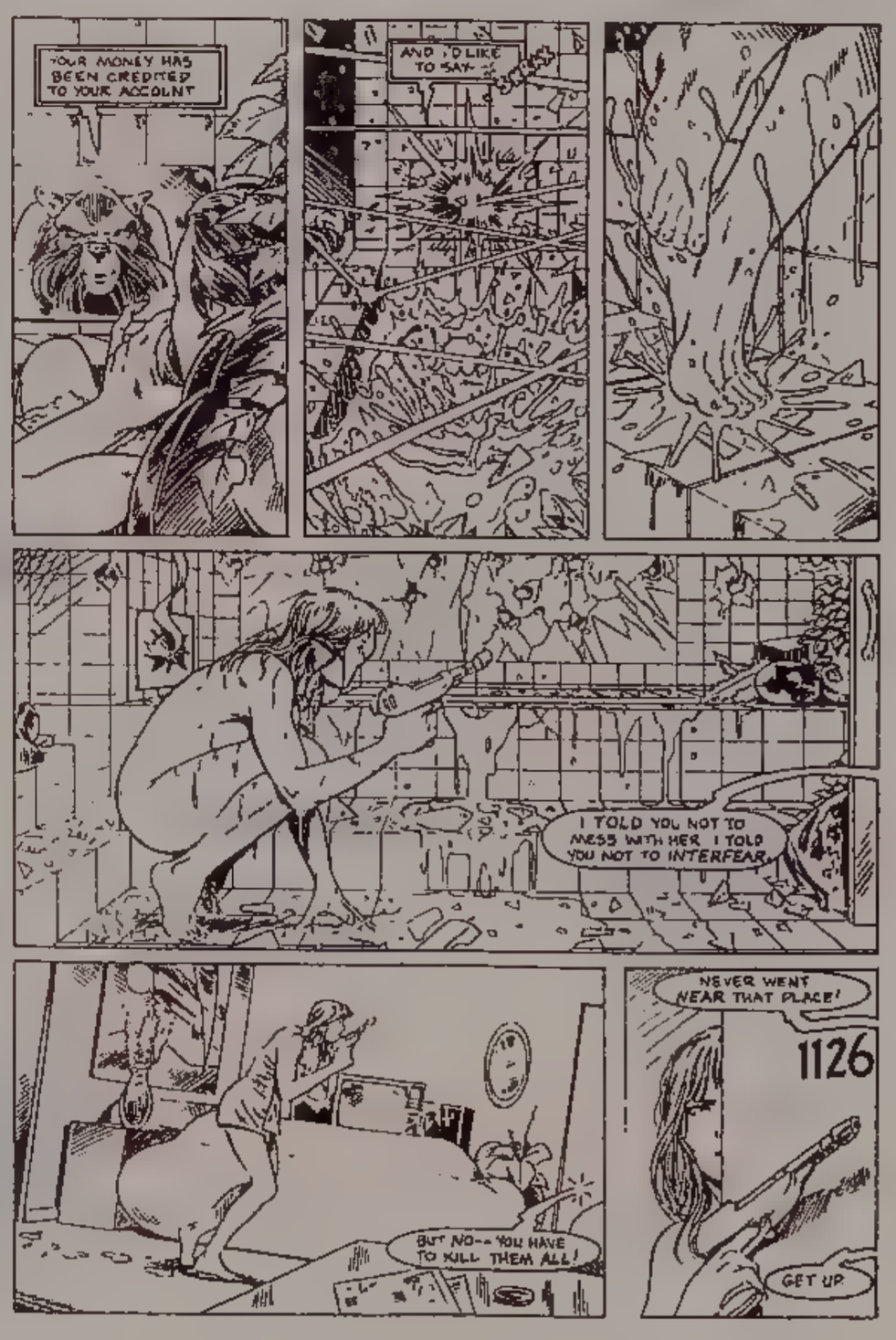
PREVIEW

MORGANA X

Published by Sky Comics
Created by Allen Freeman (inker) and Quinton Hoover (penciller)


YOUR MONEY HAS BEEN CREDITED TO YOUR ACCOUNT
AND I'D LIKE TO SAY--
I TOLD YOU NOT TO MESS WITH HER. I TOLD YOU NOT TO INTERFEAR.
BUT NO-- YOU HAVE TO KILL THEM ALL!
NEVER WENT NEAR THAT PLACE!
1126
GET UP.

Trading Card News

Comic Images News

For the first time ever, the lovely ladies of *Swimwear Illustrated* -- the largest nationally distributed swimwear magazine in the world -- are featured on their very own trading cards! Dozens of delightful dolls, barely clad in their popular Vjena swimsuits and posed in sunny, tropical locales. Plus, meet the famous Vjena Bikini Team: five voluptuous vamps who define the term "California girls"! This 90-card series will be fully supported by a nationwide campaign in both *Swimwear Illustrated*, which reaches more than a million readers per month, and *Vjena Bikini Catalogue* with a circulation of more than two million. And don't miss the introduction of Comic Images' brand new Spectrascope Chase Card -- it's a full color, multi-dimensional image that practically jumps off the card surface! Six dazzling Spectrascope Chase Cards randomly packed within the series!

Sizzling, stunning, super-realistic "Sexy Robots" have made Hajime Sorayama a household name in the fantasy art world. Now Comic Images is bringing them -- along with Sorayama's entire impressive portfolio of "metallica" -- into the spotlight with this Japanese-born super-realist's first 90-trading card series, *Sexy Robots Hajime Sorayama Collector Cards*. Plus, don't miss the six dazzling Chromium Cards randomly packed within the series!

Eclipse News

Negro Leagues All-Stars

The first foil-packed Negro Leagues set ever!

A full 110-card series featuring the greatest players from the star-studded Negro Leagues.

Included are Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, Ray Dandridge, Monte Irvin, and many, many others.

Each card will contain a detailed biography of the player, career highlights, and a painted protrait. The art is by Jon Bright and Novle Rogers. The text is by Todd Bolton and Dean Mullaney.

Eclipse is the official licensee of the Negro League Baseball Players Association, and this set is fully authorized.

FPG News

"Master of the Macabre" Cards

There is no other name in comic fandom that makes a chill run up and down the spine as does Bernie Wrightson's. As undoubtedly one of the most popular comic book artists of all time, FPG is proud to announce the first-ever trading card collection of his work!

This new, graphic 135-card series will include 45 of Wrightson's best, classic full-color paintings that have made him the popular icon he is today. Also included will be 45 brand-new, full-color paintings done exclusively for this card series! And finally, 45 cards will reproduce all of his best Frankenstein pieces, including several unpublished ones!

Bonus cards include three different "Horrific Holograms", created from entirely new artwork done exclusively for these holograms. Also included will be 1,000 randomly inserted autographed cards, which will be signed before the UV coating is applied in order to guarantee their authenticity.

These high-quality cards are printed on double-coated, heavy-weight card stock and are UV coated on both sides. This series is sold 10 cards to a premium foil pack, 36 packs to a box, and 12 boxes per case. Coming this May, the *Bernie Wrightson, Master of the Macabre* trading cards are sure to be one of 1993's most exciting card series!

Kitchen Sink News

Painted Ladies

They decorated the walls of garages, workshops, taverns, and other manly environs from the 1940's through the 1950's. Often they were the only artworks in a setting of monkey wrenches, beer taps, and men's sweat. They were the painted calendars depicting women in various stages of undress and in saucy poses.

Now, writer Max Allan Collins has compiled and annotated from his collection 36 full color cards in a deluxe color box reprinting the best calendar art by the most famous and best artists of that era. Called *Painted Ladies*, the set is the first artist by artist survey anywhere of this specialized medium.

The all ages *Painted Ladies Card Set* retails for $10.95. The cards are printed on heavy 18-point stock, and join Kitchen Sink's extremely popular *Spicy* series of painted pin-up art.

It features the work of such figures as George Petty, Alberto Vargas, Zoe Moezert, Enoch Bolles, Gil Elvgren, Earl Moran, Joyce Ballantyne, Peter Driben, and 28 more – 36 individual artists and 36 beautiful pieces of art.

The author, Max Allan Collins, is an expert on the subject. The former writer of *Dick Tracy*, he has a special interest in the subject, collecting printed pieces and original pin-up art for years. The card backs will give a history of the genre, along with biographical information on the artists, when possible.

Painted Ladies is not only a collection of beautiful art, it's an important piece of pop cultural history. Never before have the artists who rendered these titillating works been documented in one place. Now collectors and admirers of the form can have a handy reference for 36 of the most important figures in the field. Be sure to order enough of this unique and splendid card set!

SkyBox News

Star Trek Masterpieces

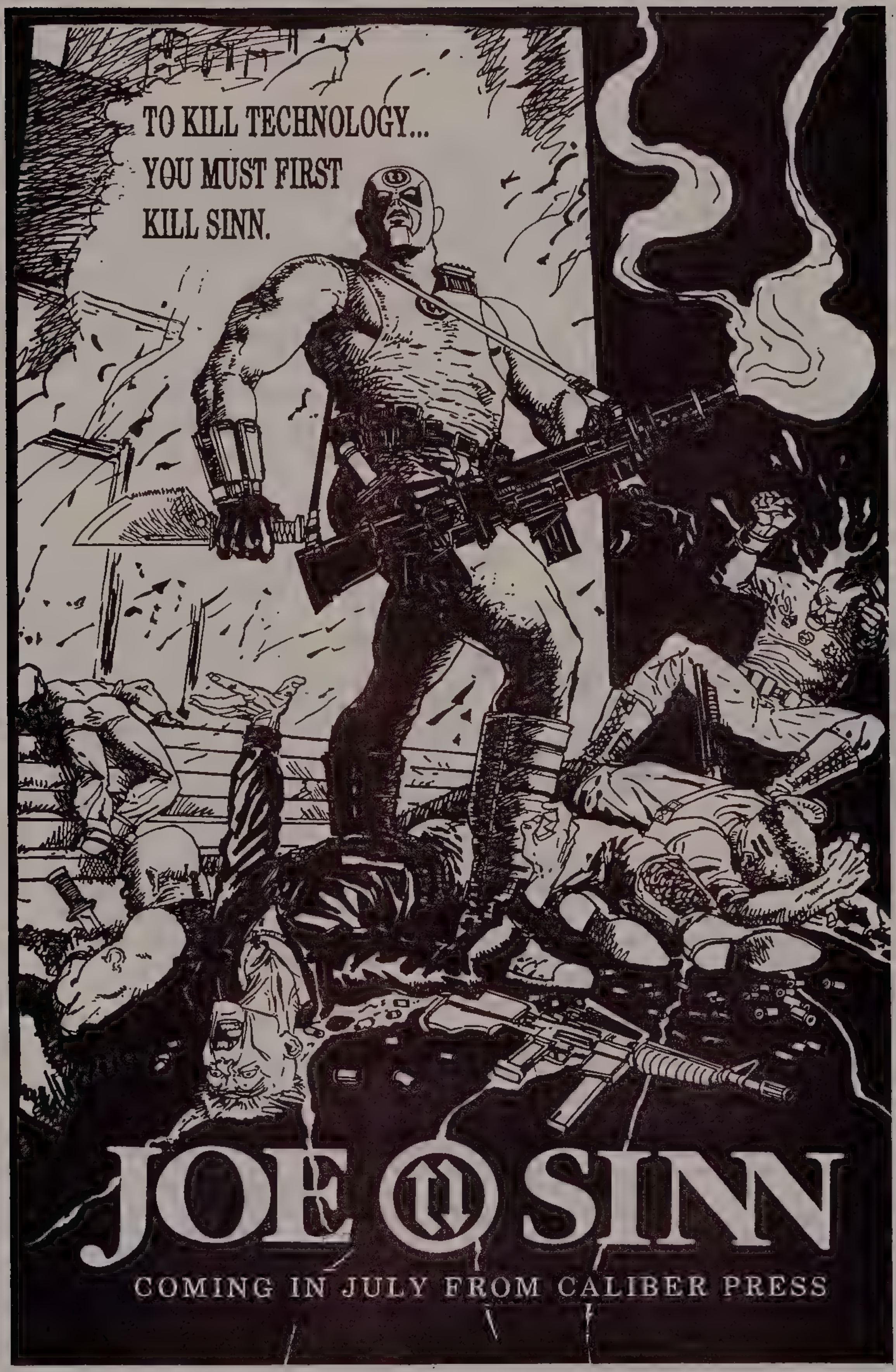
SkyBox International Inc. announced today that it will produce a new line of super premium collector cards which will apply the proven SkyBox Masterpieces Collector Cards formula – premium, hand-painted artwork, heavy card stock and UV coating, and a limited number of individually numbered cases and boxes – to the most popular science fiction franchise in the market: Star Trek.

The *Star Trek Masterpieces* card line will feature all original compositions by top science fiction and Star Trek painters. The 100-card series will include seven subsets depicting characters, spaceships, aliens, spacescapes, and important scenes from the *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* television shows as well as all six *Star Trek* feature films.

Three bonus subsets will be randomly packed in a limited number of six-card packs of *Star Trek Masterpieces*, including nine foil-stamped original compositions by fan favorite Keith Birdsong, three Spectra cards, and a special "Sneak Peek" subset featuring the new *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* television show.

SkyBox *Star Trek Masterpieces* will be shipped to retail in cases of twenty 36-pack boxes, in late July, 1993, and will be available exclusively to comic and hobby shops. The six-card packs will carry a suggested retail price of $0.99.

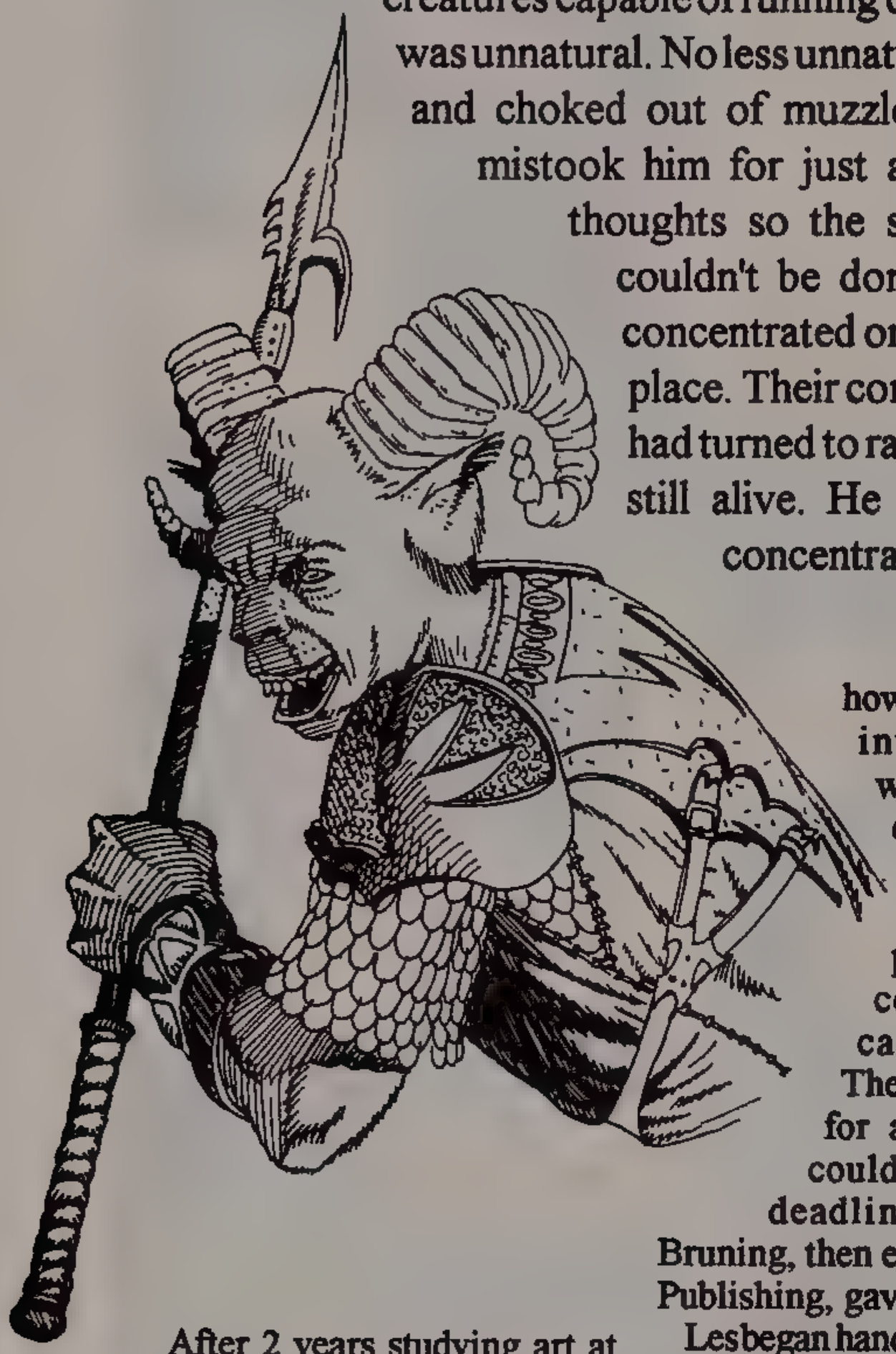
Star Trek Masterpieces represents the sixth product in a successful partnership between SkyBox and Paramount Licensing Group. The 1992 *Star Trek: The Next Generation Collector Cards* from SkyBox recently received the prestigious Gummie Award from *Non-Sport Update* as the Best Set of 1992. SkyBox is the nation's largest manufacturer and distributor of comic trading cards, and produced *Marvel Masterpieces* in 1992, one of the top-selling entertaiment card lines in history.


TO KILL TECHNOLOGY...
YOU MUST FIRST
KILL SINN.
JOE SINN
COMING IN JULY FROM CALIBER PRESS

DISCRETION

By Les Dorscheid

"Rockorcs!! This far down from the mountains, and mounted! Nathan wondered why creatures capable of running down deer on their own were mounted. This was unnatural. No less unnatural than their threats and demands, garbled and choked out of muzzles never meant for human speech. They mistook him for just another merchant. He had controlled his thoughts so the sword hadn't appeared until they left. It couldn't be done by not thinking of the sword, he had concentrated on something else. The Rockorcs beat up the place. Their contempt for settlements under the mountains had turned to rage, but all the good folk of Dragon Inn were still alive. He was not certain that would be, had his concentration wavered."



After 2 years studying art at Madison Area Technical College and 4 years at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena California, Les Dorscheid started his professional life painting products. Food mostly: cheese, salad dressing, crackers and something called Flavor Fry. Working for advertising agencies on accounts for Kraft, General Foods, Harris Transmitters and Hog procurement brochure for Oscar Mayer. He filled in the financial gaps by cleaning offices at night. "I remember going on 30 interviews in 9 months time. Showing my folio to get steady work so I could quit the night jobs." Les tells the story of how one of those interviews was with a design studio that was doing production work for a new publication, a comic book called *Nexus*. They were looking for a colorist who could make tough deadlines. Richard Bruning, then editor of Capital Publishing, gave him a shot.

Les began hand painting comic book pages. This was primarily new to comics and his early efforts helped influence the way comics were colored from then DL

Working on over 20 different titles in the past 12 years, his most recent color wizardry has been teamed with Kelly Jones' remarkable talents. Projects include *Aliens Hive*, published by Dark Horse Comics; *Deadman* and the Batman *Red Rain*, a 92 page hardcover, published by DC Comics. *Red Rain* sold out in less than a week.

For the past 6 years he has split his time coloring comics with painting covers for comics, gaming products and paperback books. Science fiction superheroes who use fusion power of suns, huge futuristic tanklike robots battling are played out. Whether it's "*Nexus*", "*Battletech*", or "*Mechwarrior*", all have powerful color and dramatic lighting. Strong composition and detail draw the viewer in, making the fantastic believable. If you look closely at the aliens, monsters, robots or maybe even the humans, you can tell he uses himself as a model. By the way, he won't show anyone the Oscar Mayer hog brochure.

Moonlit Graphics has announced the release of *"Discretion"*, the first in a series of limited edition full color fantay art prints.

This beautiful 18" x 24" print is limited to and edition of 1,000 signed and numbered. For more information contact: **Moonlit Graphics, 1415 Andaman St., Sun Prairie, WI 53590.**

"DISCRETION"

Moonlit Graphics, 1415 Andaman Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590

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